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# **NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL**

## **Monterey, California**



# **THESIS**

**SOCIAL FACTORS IMPACTING RECRUITMENT AND  
RETENTION OF THE CIVILIAN ACQUISITION  
WORKFORCE**

by

Neill G. Krost

December 2002

Thesis Advisor:  
Associate Advisor:

Raymond Franck  
James Barnard

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**REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE**

Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188

Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instruction, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302, and to the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (0704-0188) Washington DC 20503.

1. AGENCY USE ONLY (Leave blank)	2. REPORT DATE December 2002	3. REPORT TYPE AND DATES COVERED Master's Thesis	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE: Social Factors Impacting Recruitment and Retention of the Civilian Acquisition Workforce		5. FUNDING NUMBERS	
6. AUTHOR(S) Neill G. Krost			
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Naval Postgraduate School Monterey, CA 93943-5000		8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING /MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) N/A		10. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY REPORT NUMBER	
11. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES The views expressed in this thesis are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Department of Defense or the U.S. Government.			
12a. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited		12b. DISTRIBUTION CODE	
13. ABSTRACT (maximum 200 words)  This thesis looks at the recruitment and retention challenge facing the DoD's civilian acquisition workforce in light of the demographic gap caused by years of downsizing. It provides a qualitative assessment of the adequacy of existing recruitment and retention tools in light of the generational differences between current policy makers (Baby Boomers) and needed younger employees (Generation-X). Key generational characteristics are compared and assessed in relation to workforce recruitment and retention tools. The research indicates that although a generation gap exists it is not so large that bridges cannot be built. Personnel tools can be modified or created to enable culture change so that Generation-X values are embraced in the workplace. Of the existing tools, flextime; lateral movement and education opportunities; and the demo project appear most promising since they offer individual flexibility and empowerment. Among other things, this thesis recommends to increase internships; advertise career broadening and lateral movement opportunities; and centralize all job opportunities to a single site open to all interested applicants. These adjustments will help the DoD address its recruitment and retention goals.			
14. SUBJECT TERMS recruitment, retention, civilian, acquisition workforce, generation-X, baby boomer, demographic		15. NUMBER OF PAGES 123	
16. PRICE CODE			
17. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF REPORT Unclassified	18. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE Unclassified	19. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF ABSTRACT Unclassified	20. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT UL

NSN 7540-01-280-5500

Standard Form 298 (Rev. 2-89)  
Prescribed by ANSI Std. Z39-18

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**SOCIAL FACTORS IMPACTING RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION OF THE  
CIVILIAN ACQUISITION WORKFORCE**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis looks at the recruitment and retention challenge facing the DoD's civilian acquisition workforce in light of the demographic gap caused by years of downsizing. It provides a qualitative assessment of the adequacy of existing recruitment and retention tools in light of the generational differences between current policy makers (Baby Boomers) and needed younger employees (Generation-X). Key generational characteristics are compared and assessed in relation to workforce recruitment and retention tools. The research indicates that although a generation gap exists it is not so large that bridges cannot be built. Personnel tools can be modified or created to enable culture change so that Generation-X values are embraced in the workplace. Of the existing tools, flextime; lateral movement and education opportunities; and the demo project appear most promising since they offer individual flexibility and empowerment. Among other things, this thesis recommends to increase internships; advertise career broadening and lateral movement opportunities; and centralize all job opportunities to a single site open to all interested applicants. These adjustments will help the DoD address its recruitment and retention goals.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	<b>INTRODUCTION .....</b>	1
A.	BACKGROUND .....	1
B.	PURPOSE AND BENEFIT OF STUDY .....	2
C.	RESEARCH QUESTIONS.....	2
1.	Primary Research Question .....	3
2.	Subsidiary Research Questions .....	3
D.	SCOPE AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY .....	3
E.	ORGANIZATION OF THESIS .....	4
II.	<b>BACKGROUND .....</b>	7
A.	INTRODUCTION .....	7
B.	CAREER FIELDS.....	7
C.	IMPACT ON DOD MISSION.....	8
D.	ACQUISITION REFORM.....	10
E.	KEY POLICIES AND REGULATIONS.....	13
F.	SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION .....	15
III.	<b>DATA .....</b>	17
A.	INTRODUCTION .....	17
B.	THE DEMOGRAPHIC PROBLEM .....	17
1.	History.....	17
2.	Current State of the Workforce .....	20
3.	Opportunities .....	24
4.	Bottomline: Problems and Opportunities .....	26
C.	UNDERSTANDING THE NEXT GENERATION OF RECRUITS.....	27
1.	Introduction .....	27
2.	Standard View .....	29
3.	Revisionist View.....	40
4.	Attitude and Alternatives to Public Employment .....	45
5.	Summary.....	48
D.	RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION TOOLS .....	49
1.	Introduction .....	49
2.	Existing Tools .....	50
a.	<i>Recruitment .....</i>	50
b.	<i>Short-Term Hiring.....</i>	50
c.	<i>Long-Term Hiring .....</i>	52
d.	<i>Offers to Sweeten the Pot.....</i>	54
e.	<i>Retention.....</i>	55
f.	<i>Training .....</i>	55
3.	Initiatives Underway .....	56
a.	<i>Immediate Changes .....</i>	56
b.	<i>Near Term Initiatives .....</i>	59

c. Long-Term (Requires Legislative Authority) <i>Initiatives</i> .....	61
4. Conclusion .....	63
<b>IV. ANALYSIS .....</b>	<b>65</b>
A. ANALYSIS: ADEQUACY OF TOOLBOX .....	65
1. Pruning .....	65
2. Consolidating .....	67
3. Conclusion .....	88
B. ANALYSIS: GENERATIONAL DIFFERENCES.....	89
C. ANALYSIS: REASONS FOR THE RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION PROBLEM .....	89
<b>V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....</b>	<b>91</b>
A. INTRODUCTION .....	91
B. SUMMARY .....	91
1. Primary Research Question .....	91
2. Subsidiary Research Questions .....	92
C. CONCLUSIONS .....	93
D. RECOMMENDATIONS .....	93
E. AREAS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH .....	95
<b>APPENDIX. LIST OF MDAPS BY MILITARY SERVICE.....</b>	<b>97</b>
<b>LIST OF REFERENCES.....</b>	<b>103</b>
<b>INITIAL DISTRIBUTION LIST .....</b>	<b>107</b>

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 3.1.	Distribution of DoD Civilians by Age, From: The Acquisition 2005 Task Force Final Report.....	20
Figure 3.2.	Distribution of DoD Civilians by Years of Service, From: The Acquisition 2005 Task Force Final Report.....	21
Figure 3.3.	Distribution of DoD Civilians by Years of Service, From: The Acquisition 2005 Task Force Final Report.....	22
Figure 3.4.	Under Execution of Employment Goals, From: Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (Civilian Personnel Policy), Diane Disney.....	23
Figure 3.5.	Size of Acquisition Workforce, From: Acquisition 2005 Task Force Final Report.....	23
Figure 3.6.	DoD Acquisition Workforce as Part of Total Civilian Workforce, From: The Acquisition 2005 Task Force Final Report.....	24

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## LIST OF TABLES

Table 2.1.	Acquisition Workforce Career Fields, From: DAWIA Homepage, <a href="http://www.acq.osd.mil">www.acq.osd.mil</a> .....	8
Table 2.2.	Occupational Job Series and Job Titles, From: Refined Packard Count, February 2001.....	9
Table 2.3.	Partial List of MDAPs, From: OSD Website.....	10
Table 3.1.	Four Generations, From: Bridging Across the Generational Divide in the Federal Workplace, From: Zemke 2000).....	30
Table 3.2.	Making the Generation Connection, From: Nancy Pekala, Conquering the Generational Divide, Journal of Property Management.....	32
Table 3.3.	Generation Differences, From: Pekala Nancy, Conquering the Generational Divide.....	33
Table 3.4.	Work-Related Motivational Factors, From: Generation X and the Public Employee.....	41
Table 3.5.	Statistical Differences in Ranking Factors, From: Generation X and the Public Employee.....	42
Table 3.6.	Comparison of Public Employee “Wants” and “Gets”, From: Motivation in Public and Private Organizations.....	43
Table 3.7.	Comparison of Starting Salaries, From: Educaid and GS Pay Table..	48
Table 4.1.	List of Government Recruitment and Retention Tools and Initiatives.....	69
Table 4.2.	Important Factors to GenX and Boomers.....	70
Table 4.3.	Toolbox Rating Scheme.....	70
Table 4.4.	Toolbox Assessment of Importance.....	72
Table 4.5.	Tool #1.....	73
Table 4.6.	Tool #2.....	73
Table 4.7.	Tool #3.....	74
Table 4.8.	Tool #4.....	75
Table 4.9.	Tool #5.....	75
Table 4.10.	Tool #6.....	76
Table 4.11.	Tool #7.....	77
Table 4.12.	Tool #8.....	77
Table 4.13.	Tool #9.....	78
Table 4.14.	Tool #10.....	79
Table 4.15.	Tool #11.....	79
Table 4.16.	Tool #12.....	80
Table 4.17.	Tool #13.....	81
Table 4.18.	Tool #14.....	81
Table 4.19.	Tool #15.....	82
Table 4.20.	Tool #16.....	84
Table 4.21.	Initiative #1.....	85

Table 4.22.	Initiative #2.....	86
Table 4.23.	Initiative #3.....	86
Table 4.24.	Initiative #4.....	87
Table 4.25.	Initiative #5.....	88

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

A special note of thanks to my thesis advisors Professor Franck and Commander Barnard, your wisdom, guidance and latitude helped make this project a worthwhile learning experience.

To my wife Eunha, thank you for the love and support you always give me.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

### A. BACKGROUND

Ask any senior manager of an organization, “What’s your most important asset?” and odds are he will say “people”. Without high quality individuals, organizations are doomed to mediocrity because it is people that invent and implement the processes that propel organizations towards their goals. Therefore, nothing is more fundamentally important to organizational success than attracting the highest quality recruits possible and then keeping them satisfied so that they will stay in the organization.

Recruiting and retention is an on-going activity that must be an integral part of an organization’s long-term strategy. The best recruits must be carefully selected, nurtured and trained in a functional field, groomed for management positions, and carefully grown to fill critical positions within the organization. A wise organization will carefully monitor its recruitment and retention activities to ensure there is always a successive wave of replacements for each hierarchy within it. If not, the organization will eventually find itself in dire straits because it won’t have the human capital infrastructure necessary to accomplish its mission – such is the case with the Department of Defense (DoD) and its acquisition workforce.

When the Cold War ended, the DoD’s budgets were decreased and emphasis was placed on downsizing. Throughout the 1990s agencies within the DoD responded to downsizing objectives by reducing workforce manning levels through a decade long hiring freeze, offering buy-outs to encourage people to retire early, implementing Reductions-In-Force (RIFs), and embracing widespread attrition. Unfortunately decision makers over emphasized the draw down’s tactical implementation and did not strategically consider the long-term implications. As a result, much of the DoD’s current acquisition workforce is nearing retirement age and there is a significant demographic gap in its replacement. This could lead to a large and rapid loss of experience with few

seasoned replacements to step up and fill critical positions. As much as 50% of the remaining workforce may retire by 2005, a severe human capital challenge.

While the DoD scrambles to address recruitment and retention, another problem lurks in the background. Current DoD policy makers appear to be making critical decisions using their set of attitudes and beliefs as a point of perspective. It does not seem they have adequately considered that the next generation of recruits may be operating from a different set of values. Just like an expatriate who must learn a new culture to thrive in a foreign land, the DoD must first take time to learn about the next generation of recruits to develop an effective human resources strategy.

The DoD's human capital challenge is receiving attention at the highest levels of leadership, yet before they can succeed, certain questions must be answered. What do these young people think? What influences their perceptions? What is important to them? How do they differ from us? It is only through fitting the DoD personnel strategy to this next generation of recruits that the DoD will be able to successfully attract and retain them.

## **B. PURPOSE AND BENEFIT OF STUDY**

The purpose and main benefit of this study is to assess various factors to inform the DoD about whether its current recruitment and retention strategy is on target or whether it needs to rethink the problem to be truly competitive. An additional by product of this thesis will be a catalog of available tools for managers to use in recruitment and retention, and a look at their likely appeal to the next generation. Such a catalog was identified as a need in a recent conference involving a multitude of Government agencies. Finally, the research will provide a useful source of information for managers seeking to quickly understand the factors impacting their ability to competitively recruit and retain the needed acquisition workforce. This thesis addresses a very current problem that impacts all DoD organizations and all levels of management.

## **C. RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

This thesis has a primary research question and four principal subsidiary research questions that support and flow from the primary one. This thesis shall

explore and analyze many issues, but the intent will always be to answer the research questions.

### **1. Primary Research Question**

What are the key social factors that might impact the DoD's ability to successfully recruit and retain the next generation acquisition workforce?

### **2. Subsidiary Research Questions**

- What is the problem the DoD is facing regarding maintaining its future acquisition workforce and why is it having it?
- What are the attitudes, values, and beliefs of the next generation of recruits?
- What tools are currently available to aid in recruitment and retention?
- Which of these tools appear most promising?

## **D. SCOPE AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The research will be principally qualitative in nature as it seeks to answer the research questions. As previously stated, the thrust of the thesis will be to see if the DoD's current recruitment and retention strategy is appropriate considering the attitudes, values, and beliefs of the next generation of recruits. Specifically, the thesis scope shall be an examination and analysis of: 1) the demographic problem; 2) the next generation of recruits; and 3) the current recruitment and retention tool mix. To better focus the thesis, emphasis shall be placed on the business acquisition career fields (Contracting, Auditing, Financial Management, Program Management etc.) and business majors that might be brought into them.

The methodology used in this thesis research consists of a literature search of applicable books, reports, journal and newspaper articles, policies and regulations, and other information sources. Where that research proves insufficient individual interviews are conducted to provide additional perspective and insight on a specific topic. Determinations and recommendations are based upon the research and analysis.

The data will be analyzed qualitatively. In terms of the demographic problem itself, analysis consists of examining probable short-term decisions that

were made and why they were made without considering their long-term impact on the workforce. Exploring why these decisions might have been made will also shed light upon the existing DoD culture and reveal some of its inherent problems that may ultimately impact recruitment and retention.

Regarding understanding the next generation of recruits, some basic data shall first be presented to better comprehend this group's culture. The follow-on analysis addresses sociological differences contributing to a generation gap between the recruits and the policy makers. The analysis then explores how this delta may impact effective recruitment and retention.

In analyzing the adequacy of the recruitment and retention toolbox, tools shall be compared against that criteria determined most important to the next generation and an assessment made of how well they match.

It is through the process of presenting relevant data and then performing independent analysis that this thesis shall answer the primary and subsidiary research questions.

## **E. ORGANIZATION OF THESIS**

Chapter II, "Background", provides an overview of the DoD acquisition workforce. It identifies the various acquisition workforce career fields, addresses the criticality of the acquisition workforce in view of the DoD mission, and highlights key acquisition reform initiatives and other regulations and policies that impact the acquisition workforce.

Chapter III, "Data", provides all the researched information related to the thesis' scope. Subsections shall contain information addressing the three main topic areas (the problem; the next generation; and the tools) fully.

Chapter IV, "Analysis", provides independent analysis performed by the researcher relative to each topic area. It contains thought, analysis, interpretation, and perspective as appropriate. Where appropriate this analysis shall be supported by information gleaned from existing literature and, at other times, it shall be instinct and intuition based on experience and observation.

Chapter V, “Conclusions and Recommendations”, provides a summary of the thesis and conclusions as appropriate. In addition, there shall be a variety of recommendations offered as a result of the research and analysis.

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## II. BACKGROUND

### A. INTRODUCTION

In order to understand the importance of the DoD developing a recruitment and retention strategy that will be competitive in today's market place, it is necessary to first shed light on what the acquisition workforce is and what it does in support of defense objectives. Accordingly, this chapter shall provide a broad overview of the acquisition workforce by examining why it was established, its various career fields and their impact on the DoD mission, pertinent acquisition reform initiatives, and key regulations and policies governing the acquisition workforce. With this background, the reader should be better prepared to delve into and appreciate the subject matter of this thesis.

### B. CAREER FIELDS

The acquisition workforce is made up of both civilian and military personnel whose occupation is either directly or indirectly involved with all phases of acquisition. This may include research and development, initial design and prototype manufacturing, full production, fielding and maintenance, and eventual disposal. In short, anything that a military member might wear, touch, use, eat, fire, ride on, or live in would at one time or another be effected by a member of the acquisition workforce.

The last official count showed 135,014 individuals in the acquisition workforce of which 120,139 were civilians and 14,875 were military. Since the military is a separate organization and has a distinct recruitment and retention program, whenever the acquisition workforce is mentioned in this thesis it is referring to the civilian population. Making up the acquisition workforce are 78 occupational series, with corresponding job titles subdivided into 12 acquisition career fields as detailed in Tables 2.1 and 2.2.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Key Acquisition and Technology Workforce, Refined Packard Count for September 2000 DMDC Data, February 2001.

Table 2.1. Acquisition Workforce Career Fields, From: DAWIA Homepage,  
[www.acq.osd.mil](http://www.acq.osd.mil).

Program Management  
Communication-Computer Systems  
Contracting  
Purchasing  
Industrial Property Management  
Business, Cost Estimating and Financial Management  
Quality Assurance  
Manufacturing and Production  
Acquisition Logistics  
Systems Planning, Research, Development and Engineering  
Test and Evaluation  
Auditing<sup>2</sup>

### C. IMPACT ON DOD MISSION

The acquisition workforce plays a critical role in the accomplishment of the DoD mission. It is responsible for supplies, infrastructure, and vehicles. It is also charged with procuring weapons and products that embody the newest technologies. The acquisition workforce directly supports the strategic objectives of the U.S. National Military Strategy by making a complicated acquisition process work.

There are three primary categories of programs that constitute the bulk of the DoD's many programs. The estimated dollar value is typically the deciding factor in class categorization (I, II, or III). Major Defense Acquisition Programs (MDAPs), category I, are the most visible and expensive programs, and require the highest levels of review. Programs are either specifically designated as an MDAP or they have an estimated total expenditure for research, development, test, and evaluation of more than \$365 million in FY 2000 constant dollars or more than \$2.190B in procurement in FY2000 constant dollars.<sup>3</sup> MDAPS are either Acquisition Category (ACAT) I "D" (for defense) or "C" (for component) depending on the level of decision authority involved.

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<sup>2</sup> DAWIA Homepage, [www.acq.osd.mil](http://www.acq.osd.mil).

<sup>3</sup> Major Defense Acquisition Program (MDAP) Lists, December 2000, [www.acq.osd.mil](http://www.acq.osd.mil).

Table 2.2. Occupational Job Series and Job Titles, From: Refined Packard Count, February 2001.

Series	Title	Series	Title
150	Geography	890	Agricultural Engineering
180	Psychologist	892	Ceramic Engineering
246	Contractor Industry Relations	893	Chemical Engineering
301	Administration & Program	894	Welding Engineering
334	Computer Specialist	896	Industrial Engineering
340	Program Management	1021	Office Drafting
343	Management/Program Analyst	1101	General Business & Industry
346	Logistics Management	1102	Contracting
391	Telecommunications Specialist	1103	Industrial Property Management
392	Communications Specialist	1104	Property Disposal
401	General Biological Science	1105	Purchasing
403	Microbiology	1130	Public Utilities Specialist
413	Physiologist	1150	Industrial Specialist
471	Agronomy	1152	Production Control
501	Financial Administration	1160	Financial Analyst
505	Financial Management	1301	General Physical Science
510	Accounting	1306	Health Physics
511	Auditing	1310	Physics
560	Budget Analysis	1313	Geophysics
690	Industrial Hygiene	1315	Hydrology
801	General Engineering	1320	Chemistry
803	Safety Engineering	1321	Metallurgy
804	Fire Prevention	1330	Space Science
806	Materials Engineering	1340	Meteorology
808	Architecture	1350	Geology
810	Civil Engineering	1360	Oceanography
818	Engineering Drafting	1361	Navigational Information
8019	Environmental Engineering	1370	Cartography
830	Mechanical Engineering	1372	Geodesy
840	Nuclear Engineering	1373	Land Surveying
850	Electrical Engineering	1386	Photographic Technology
854	Computer Engineering	1510	Actuary
855	Electronics Engineering	1515	Operations Research
858	Biomedical Engineering	1520	Mathematics
861	Aerospace Engineering	1529	Mathematical Statistician
871	Naval Architecture	1530	Statistician
873	Ship Surveying	1550	Computer Science
880	Mining Engineering	1910	Quality Assurance
881	Petroleum Engineering	2003	Supply Program Management

There are currently 84 MDAPs. The MDAP list changes as new programs are added and other programs are completed or discontinued. In addition to the MDAPs, there are hundreds more smaller programs all supported by the

acquisition workforce. The Appendix lists all 84 MDAPs while several of the most recognized programs are listed in Table 2.3. Suffice it to say, the acquisition workforce is critical to the nation's defense.

Table 2.3. Partial List of MDAPs, From: OSD Website.

**ARMY DAB (ACAT I D) LIST**

COMANCHE – Reconnaissance Attack Helicopter

CRUSADER – Advanced Field Artillery System/Future Armored Resupply Vehicle

**ARMY COMPONENT (ACAT I C) LIST**

BRADLEY UPGRADE - Bradley Fighting Vehicle System Upgrade

FMTV - Family of Medium Tactical Vehicles.

**NAVY DAB (ACAT I D) LIST**

CVN(X) - Next Generation Nuclear Aircraft Carrier

SSN 774 - VIRGINIA CLASS Submarine

**NAVY COMPONENT (ACAT I C) LIST**

CVN 68 - NIMITZ Class Nuclear Powered Aircraft Carriers

V-22 - OSPREY Joint Advanced Vertical Lift Aircraft

**AIR FORCE DAB (ACAT I D) LIST**

F-22 - Advanced Tactical Fighter

NAVSTAR GPS – Global Positioning System

**AIR FORCE COMPONENT (ACAT I C) LIST**

B-2A - SPIRIT Stealth Bomber

C-130J - HERCULES Cargo Aircraft

**DoD DAB (ACAT I D) LIST**

Ballistic Missile Defense Organization Programs:

PATRIOT PAC-3 - Patriot Advanced Capability

THAAD - Theater High Altitude Area Defense (Army)

JSF - Joint Strike Fighter

**D. ACQUISITION REFORM**

Acquisition reform is a background theme central to understanding the importance of a viable DoD acquisition workforce recruitment and retention strategy. Simply put, acquisition reform is the DoD's adoption of best business practices; yet, smart decisions require bright people. Therefore, the DoD needs

to ensure it is able to attract and keep a high quality workforce to implement acquisition reform.

Acquisition reform initiatives date back to the first days of Government procurement. They have generally sought to acquire necessities better, faster, and cheaper. Over the years reform has occasionally resurged as an important theme, especially when “horror” stories of ridiculously priced hammers or procurement fraud brought national attention upon acquisition practices. In the 1990s, various laws including the Federal Acquisition Reform Act and the Federal Acquisition Streamlining Act set long-term objectives for DoD acquisition practices. However, despite legislation that seems highly sensible, acquisition reform remains elusive. This is because acquisition involves spending billions of dollars; when money is involved, political lines are drawn and competing interests prevent swift and decisive reform actions.<sup>4</sup>

The key objectives of acquisition reform are to obtain the best quality items cheaper and faster; adopt commercial market place practices; use commercial items instead of military standards and specifications; streamline processes; eliminate redundancy; reduce Government oversight and regulations; emphasize performance results; implement Integrated Process Product and Development, and other forms of teaming; focus on the customer; and make the acquisition workforce more professional<sup>5</sup>. The following list briefly defines some key reform initiatives<sup>6</sup> and 7:

Audit/Inspection Reform – requiring less data from contractors and eliminating redundant audit/inspection requirements.

Contractor Data Requirements – increasing thresholds for data certification and data providing requirements.

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<sup>4</sup> Cancian, Mark, *Acquisition Reform: It's Not As Easy As It Seems*, Acquisition Review Quarterly – Summer 1995.

<sup>5</sup> Lamm Dave V. Dr., Naval Postgraduate School, class notes from MN 3303 Contracting.

<sup>6</sup> Reig, Raymond W., *Baselining Acquisition Reform*, Acquisition Review Quarterly – Winter 2000.

<sup>7</sup> Sherman, Stanley, N., *Government Procurement Management*, 1999.

Buying Commercial Items – eliminating military standards and specifications and procuring what the market place produces. Also, increasing the Simplified Acquisition threshold to \$5 million for commercial item contracts.

Electronic Commerce – using electronic data interchange to standardize and expedite information and transactional exchanges.

Integrated Product and Process Teams – maximizing cross-functional teams to make informed and prudent decisions at the earliest stages of the acquisition cycle.

Multiyear Contracts – extending the contractual commitment to reliable vendors to add stability to acquisition programs.

Outsourcing – focusing on core competencies and having non-Government sources perform other functions more efficiently.

Partnerships with Industry – reducing adversarial relationships by integrating industry into processes and decisions throughout the acquisition.

Performance-Based Contracting – writing contracts that tell the contractor what is wanted not how to do it, and then monitoring based on those performance requirements.

Reduced Government Oversight – reducing redundancy, micro-management, information requirements, and focusing on end results.

Specifications and Standards – eliminating those that are unnecessary, and instead, accepting commercial market place practices.

Workforce Education and Professionalism – elevate the status of the workforce through education requirements and opportunities, training, and ethical standards.

For purposes of this thesis it is not important that the reader understand the detail of all these initiatives. There are many more that haven't been mentioned. What is important to understand is that acquisition reform initiatives mark a fundamental change in the way the DoD has traditionally performed acquisition functions. Through acquisition reform, the DoD is dramatically changing its culture. The DoD has moved "away from governmental strategies that were risk-avoiding to a government that embraces change, initiative, and risk

management”<sup>8</sup>. However, in order to successfully implement the many changes involved, the DoD must have a flexible, intelligent, and motivated acquisition workforce. To that end, it is not the classic bureaucrat (rule driven behavior) but rather the individual (creative decision making) that finds a way to achieve goals through prudent business decisions and lateral thinking that is desired on the payrolls – and this leads back to the need to attract and retain the best people.

#### **E. KEY POLICIES AND REGULATIONS**

There are many policies and regulations that impact the acquisition workforce and the way that it does business, however, there are three that stand out. They are the Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act (DAWIA), the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR), and the DoD 5000 series regulations, all by the way, are inextricably linked to acquisition reform. Another process with a myriad of policies and regulations worth mentioning is the ever-changing hiring process designed by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM).

The DAWIA was passed into law in 1990. It was established because the Government recognized that “compared to industry counterparts, this workforce is under trained, underpaid and inexperienced.”<sup>9</sup> And “that acquisition is such a complex process that professional skills and attributes are essential for the people performing acquisition functions. Thus a comprehensive program is needed to ensure required improvement in the quality and professionalism of those individuals working in acquisition positions throughout the DoD.”<sup>10</sup> Quotation should be indented .05” from left & right margins w/o quotation marks.

Essentially the DAWIA identifies specific requirements for establishing an Acquisition Corps, identifying critical acquisition positions, and enhancing

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<sup>8</sup> Decker, Gilber, Assistant Secretary of the Army for Research Development and Acquisition, 1997 Speech (p. 249 Sherman).

<sup>9</sup> Mavroules, Nicholas Congressman, *Creating a Professional Acquisition Workforce*, National Contract Management Journal, Volume 24, Issue 2, 1991.

<sup>10</sup> Mavroules, Nicholas Congressman, *Creating a Professional Acquisition Workforce*, National Contract Management Journal, Volume 24, Issue 2, 1991.

professional development through work experience, education and training.<sup>11</sup> These requirements were designed to make the acquisition career fields on par with and similarly recognized as other professions. The Act does this using several techniques. Entry-level personnel are required to have a bachelor's degree in a related academic field. Existing personnel are required to obtain varying levels (there are three levels) of professional certification as they advance in rank. The difference between the levels involves the amount of training courses completed and time spent in a related position. Additionally, there is a further requirement for 80 hours of continuous learning attainable in a variety of ways. Of course, there are the standard exceptions, grandfather provisions, waivers and so forth. The DAWIA, nonetheless, raises the stakes in recruitment and retention. The more the Government wants upfront from new hires the more it has to give, and as current employees obtain valuable skills they become hire off targets for other organizations. Hence, the need for a competitive strategy to attract and keep the best personnel is underlined.

The Federal Acquisition Regulation, its accompanying Defense supplement, and the 5000 series regulations are key guidelines governing much of the procurement and acquisition process. It is not important for purposes of this thesis for the reader to know details related to these regulations. The FAR and 5000 series are encompassing and lengthy regulations filled with guidance on processes related to the acquisition of goods and services. The FAR, amongst other things, forms the basis for contract formulation, award, administration, and resolution of related scenarios. There are many courses that acquisition personnel attend in order to learn the ins and outs of the FAR. It often takes many years to master the FAR. The private sector is also, by virtue of any contractual agreements, bound by the FAR. Personnel educated and experienced in using the FAR have a very marketable skill of great value to many private sector organizations. The 5000 Series consists of three regulations (DoDD 5000.1, DoDI 5000.2, and DoD 5000.2-R) that provide mandatory

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<sup>11</sup> Garcia Andrea, Keyner Hugo, Robillard Thomas, and VanMullekom Mary, *The Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act: Five Years Later*, Acquisition Review Quarterly – Fall 1996.

guidance and regulation related to the management of DoD acquisition programs. The existence of the FAR and the 5000 series creates a need for an intelligent acquisition workforce that is able to properly apply these directives in acquisition programs. The complexity of the directives and the time it takes to learn to use them are important reasons for the DoD to ensure it can attract and keep skilled and knowledgeable personnel. If not, certainly the private sector will swoop them up to strengthen their own organizations.

The difficulty and length of the federal hiring process itself often results in a loss of the best candidates who are quickly hired by more efficient organizations. The root of this can be found in Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 that outlines standards of selection for hiring.<sup>12</sup> The standard process for most entry-level job series outlined by the Office of Personnel Management requires candidates to take a written qualifications test and then they are placed on a central register. Agencies then tap into the central register as a source of qualified candidates. All this can take months. There are notable exceptions, for example, the Outstanding Scholar Program and the Presidential Management Internship allow highly qualified individuals to by-pass the process, but this is limited to a very select pool of individuals.<sup>13</sup> The personnel hiring system has long been a source of complaints for managers. In a recent taskforce meeting involving managers from many federal agencies, they all agreed that there was a need to speed up and streamline the hiring process.<sup>14</sup>

## F. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This chapter has provided a brief overview of the acquisition workforce, its importance, and factors of influence. Types of jobs and career fields, major programs, on-going acquisition reform, and key policies and regulations were presented. The point of this overview was to show that the DoD acquisition workforce is absolutely critical to national defense. Further, the acquisition

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<sup>12</sup> United States Office of Personnel Management, Strategic Plan FY2000 – FY2005, *Federal Human Resources Management For The 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, 30 Sep 2000.

<sup>13</sup> U.S. Department of Defense, *Acquisition Managers Recruiting, Hiring and Retention Handbook*.

<sup>14</sup> Workforce 2005 Task Force, conference held May 15 – 16, 2000.

workforce performs work that requires highly skilled and professional personnel. It requires career professionals that are both motivated and dedicated to accomplish important and time sensitive missions.

In conclusion, to best perform its mission the acquisition workforce needs to attract high quality individuals and retain them once they achieve full performance level. If not, other industries will have first pick of the best entry-level candidates and later they will snatch away the DoD's top performers. Each scenario represents a loss for the DoD and underscores the importance of a viable human resources strategy.

### **III. DATA**

#### **A. INTRODUCTION**

This thesis is examining social factors that might impact the DoD's ability to successfully recruit and retain the next generation acquisition workforce. At this point, it is beneficial to overview the contents of this next chapter. Chapter III contains distinct sets of data related to the thesis topic. In particular, this chapter includes information from three separate topic areas. The first concerns the demographic problem facing the workforce. The second is data about the next generation of recruits. The final area catalogs the various recruitment and retention tools available to DoD managers. At first glance these topics may seem entirely separate, however Chapter IV will link these areas together and form a basis for the recommendations offered in Chapter V.

#### **B. THE DEMOGRAPHIC PROBLEM**

##### **1. History**

Not long ago there was a series of six articles in the Washington Post entitled "Empty Pipeline: The Federal Employment Crisis." They provided a look at the demographic problem facing the Federal Government. The articles contained the following statements from various senior individuals concerned with this issue: "We have a human-capital time-bomb ticking"; "I think we are going to have a tremendous exodus of institutional experience and leadership. If we don't start seriously planning for it now, there will be a drop-off in quality."; and "There is a potential crisis."<sup>15</sup> What these quotes are all referring to is the potential human resources disaster facing the Federal Government. In the next few years, a significant portion of current employees will be eligible to retire leaving agencies with a seemingly insurmountable demographic gap. The proximate cause is a decade long hiring-freeze and force structure reductions to match falling budgets. In the DoD the problem is particularly acute. In addition to a near 50% reduction that has already occurred, the DoD faces a further talent

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<sup>15</sup> Barr, Stephen, Washington Post, *Empty Pipeline: The Federal Employment Crisis*, May, 2000.

drain. More than 50% of the civilian acquisition workforce will be eligible to retire by 2005.

Experts and policy makers concur that there is an imminent catastrophe that needs a long-term strategic solution; yet it seems a logical first step for this thesis is to discuss in detail when and how this situation came about. In a recent press meeting Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld summarized succinctly the events that have led to the human capital challenge facing DoD.

He cited the end of the cold war as the essential root cause. This is because during the cold war the National Military Strategy was geared towards fighting the Soviet Union. Congress approved appropriately large budgets for DoD to maintain that capability. As a result, DoD was able to continually maintain extensive existing infrastructure and weapons platforms, and at the same time allocate significant resources to mission expanding programs designed to advance the technological superiority of the armed forces. These programs were organized and managed by the acquisition workforce.

With the end of the cold war came large budget cuts that significantly affected the acquisition workforce. For over a decade, the DoD downsized. The DoD realigned and closed numerous bases, consolidated activities, pruned weapons programs, implemented zero percent growth policies, forced across the board department reductions, instituted hiring freezes and reductions-in-force, outsourced and privatized functions, and implemented early retirement and buy-out policies to increase attrition. Tactical, short-term decisions emphasized meeting downsizing objectives and agencies were evaluated on their ability to adjust to a continually shrinking budget. The civilian acquisition workforce shrank from approximately 250,000 in 1990 to 145,000 in 1999. These short-term solutions have created big long-term problems.

As it assessed its military capabilities, the DoD realized that warfare was changing. The missions of the future not only included major conflict capability, but also asymmetrical threats, peace-keeping missions, prevention of weapons of mass destruction proliferation and other activities that require a much more

nimble and versatile military. According to Admiral Vern Clark, Chief of Naval Operations:

We will achieve future war-fighting effectiveness through transformational technologies, innovative operational concepts, and robust procurement. The goal is to realize major increases in our Navy's combat performance in the areas of mobility, agility, lethality, speed, stealth, precision and firepower.<sup>16</sup>

In response, the DoD is implementing major modernization programs to achieve technological superiority in all mission areas, particularly the use of information. Once again Admiral Clark,

The Navy is in a state of transformation and it all centers on knowledge superiority and battle space dominance. Fifteen years from now we will see a dramatic change in our ability to get more information into the hands of war fighters at speeds and with a quality that are today only figments of our imagination. We want to make decisions based on superior knowledge. This is what our transformation is about. We must continue to strive for speed and agility, adaptation and innovation. We are doing it, and we are working on it as hard as we can.

Implicit in Admiral Clark's statements is an increased emphasis on activities performed by the acquisition workforce.

It was as the DoD came to grips with transformation requirements that it recognized the human capital crisis. In addition to its other challenges, the DoD faced a retirement-driven brain drain. Considerable experience and skill was about to walk out the door and over the previous years it had done little to ensure qualified replacements were ready step up and fill critical positions. There is a need for more than mere bodies. The DoD needs the right individuals to lead transformation – high quality, experienced and motivated. Secretary Rumsfeld testified that selecting the right individuals for key positions will be the single most important aspect of managing the defense transformation.<sup>17</sup> It is people that matter.

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<sup>16</sup> Clark, Vern, Admiral, CNO Guidance for 2002, Future Readiness, [www.chinfo.navy.mil](http://www.chinfo.navy.mil).

<sup>17</sup> Rumsfeld, Donald, Secretary of Defense, Testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee on the 2003 Budget, C-Span news, 05 Feb 2002.

## 2. Current State of the Workforce

While the task will likely increase both in volume and difficulty, current projections indicate that 50% of the civilian acquisition workforce may be retirement eligible in 2005. Compounding this problem is the fact that many of these individuals hold positions of great responsibility or otherwise possess significant experience and unique skills. If this exodus materializes the acquisition workforce will have little corporate experience and depth in the decade to come. Figure 3.1 tracks the demographic shift of the downsizing era that now confronts the DoD. It shows that the median age of the workforce has increased by five years and that there has been a 75% decrease in the number of employees in the thirty-one and under age group.

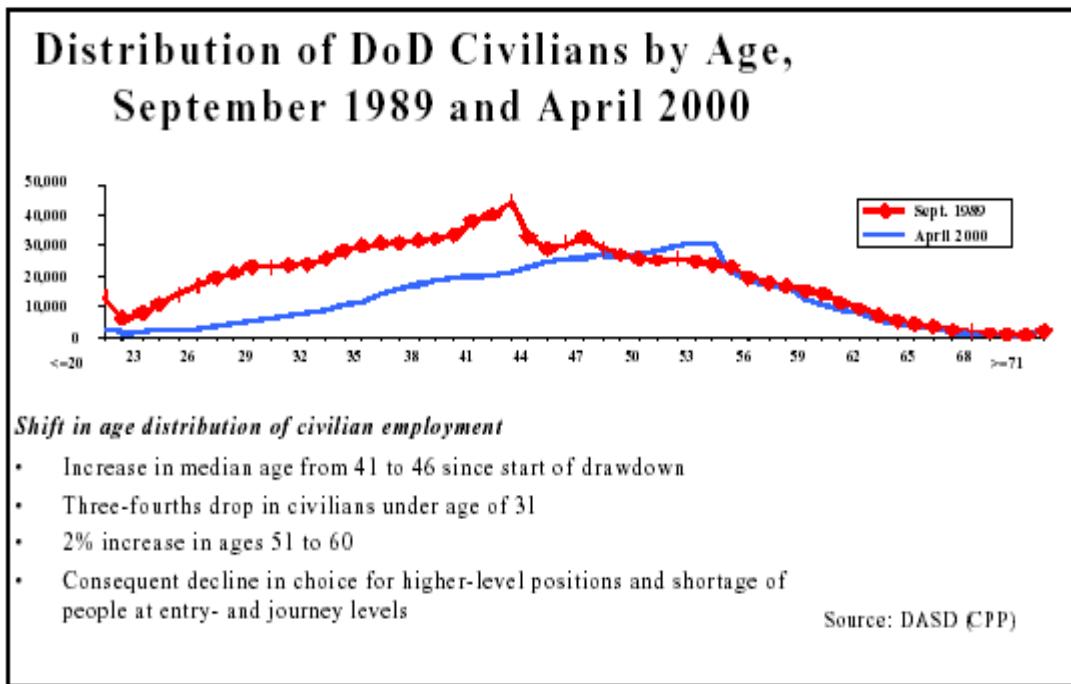


Figure 3.1. Distribution of DoD Civilians by Age, From: The Acquisition 2005 Task Force Final Report.

Figure 3.2, on the other hand, shows the distribution of the civilian acquisition workforce by years of service. It indicates there has been a dramatic reduction in the number of employees with less than fifteen years of work experience. This means that as retirees exit the workforce there are fewer

individuals with sufficient work experience and skill to fill the many anticipated vacancies. This statistic fails to show an additional critical aspect – Government acquisition is unique and it often takes years of experience to develop the expertise to make good decisions. However, the DoD doesn't have sufficient numbers of people with the experience to make good acquisition decisions.

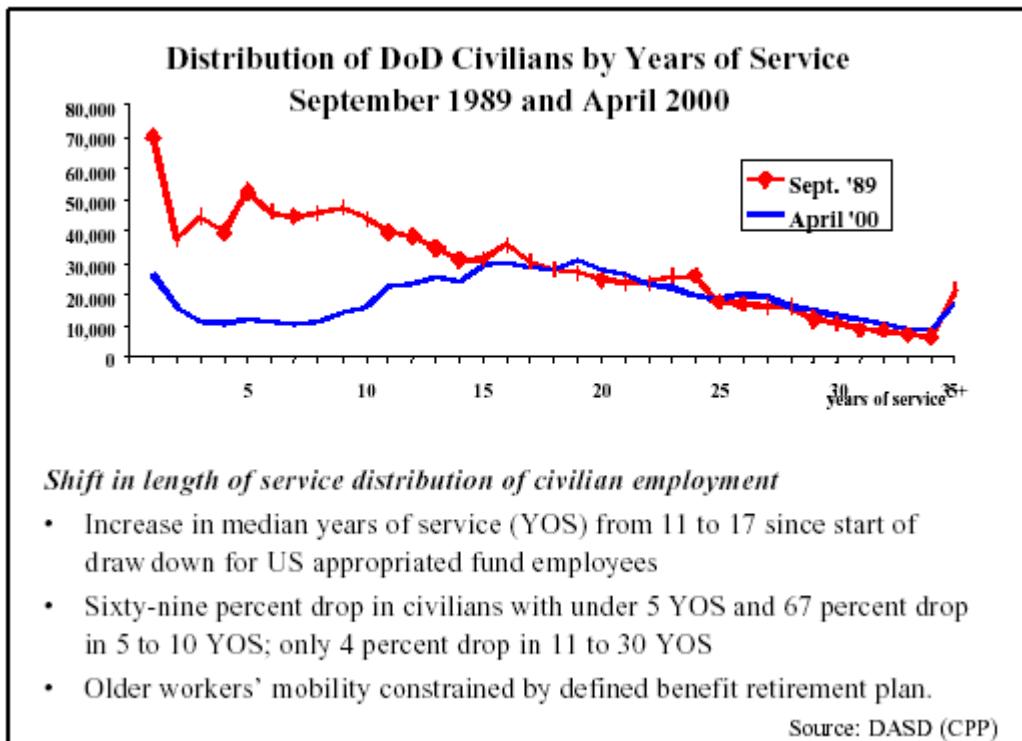


Figure 3.2. Distribution of DoD Civilians by Years of Service, From: The Acquisition 2005 Task Force Final Report.

During the draw down, the total DoD civilian workforce was trimmed back 37% from 1,117,000 to 700,000 employees. Its acquisition workforce was reduced even more, 47%. This combined with the potential retirements by 2005 could leave the acquisition workforce woefully short of experience. Figure 3.3 shows the historic and projected trend of the total civilian workforce. This is based on the previous administration's budgetary reduction plans.

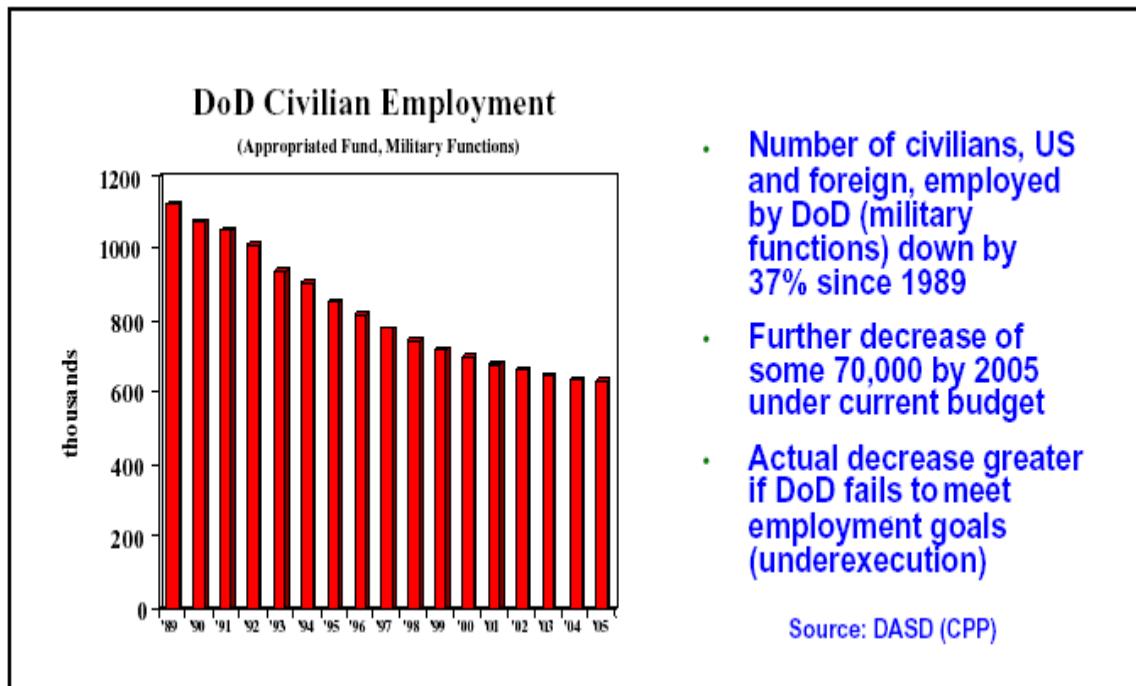


Figure 3.3. Distribution of DoD Civilians by Years of Service, From: The Acquisition 2005 Task Force Final Report.

This negative trend of a declining workforce has been further aggravated by the DoD's failure to execute overall hiring plans. Figure 3.4 charts the under execution of hiring goals from 1993 to 1999. What may appear to be a small percentage shortfall is compounded by the repeating pattern.

Thus, as Figure 3.5 shows the civilian acquisition workforce has been reduced significantly during the decade of the 1990s, by nearly 50%.

A final graphical look at the acquisition workforce in Figure 3.6 shows that even as downsizing has reduced the total DoD civilian population, the acquisition workforce has been reduced from 23% to 17% of the DoD civilian total.

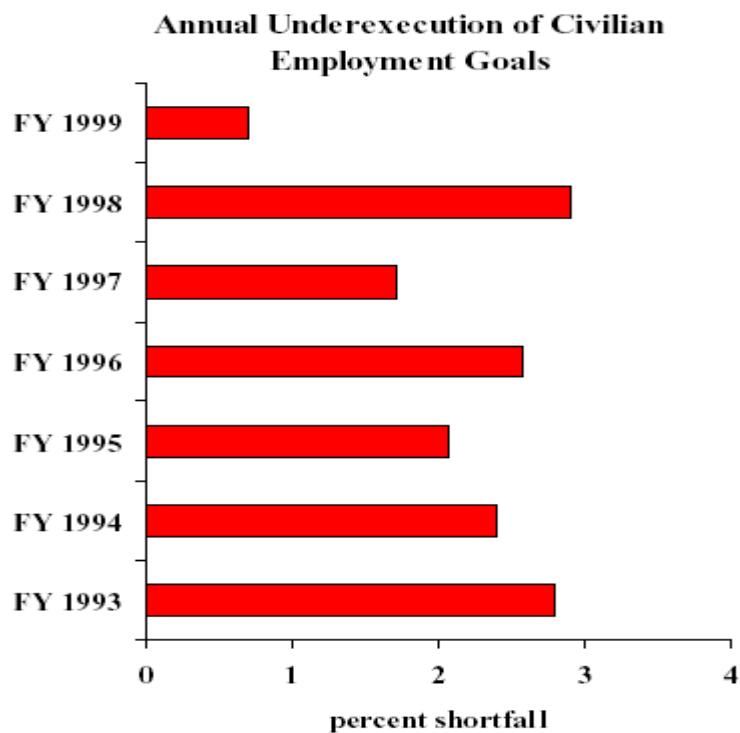


Figure 3.4. Under Execution of Employment Goals, From: Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (Civilian Personnel Policy), Diane Disney.

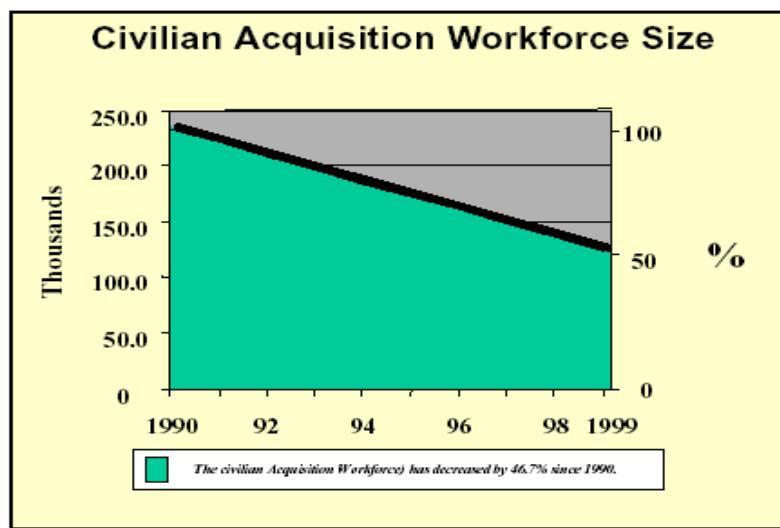


Figure 3.5. Size of Acquisition Workforce, From: Acquisition 2005 Task Force Final Report.

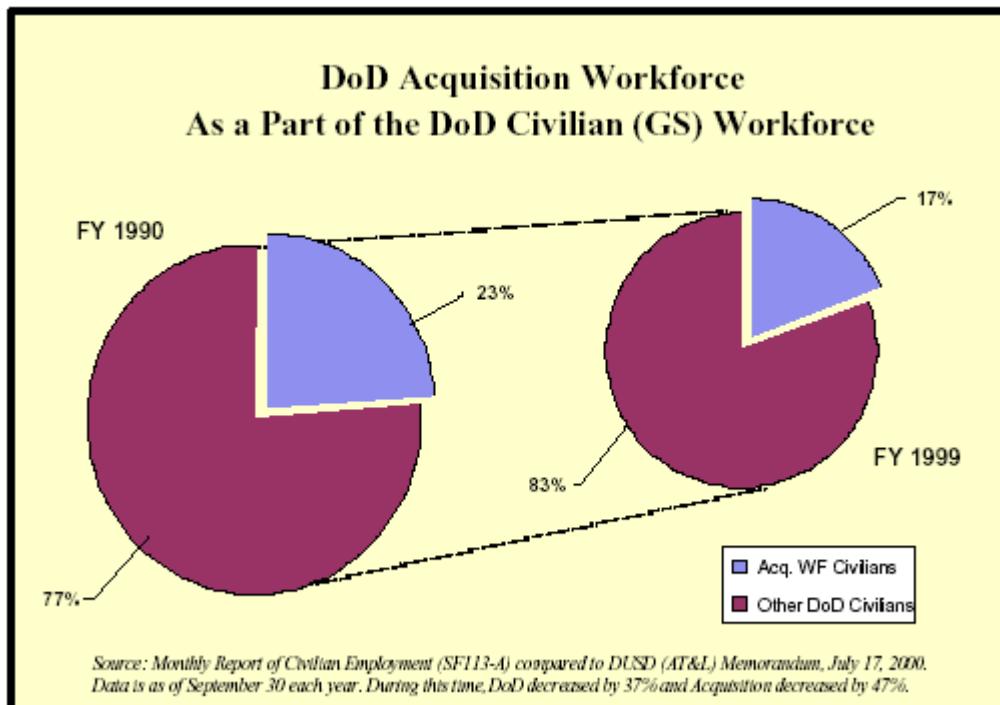


Figure 3.6. DoD Acquisition Workforce as Part of Total Civilian Workforce,  
From: The Acquisition 2005 Task Force Final Report.

While it is obvious that the acquisition workforce has been reduced, what is less noticeable, is that the expectations of the acquisition workforce have transformed dramatically as well:

The nature of work is also changing as advanced technology, increased contract oversight requirements, and a more complex mission create the need for more multifunctional, multi-skilled workers with higher education, more advanced certifications, and increased capability.<sup>18</sup>

This indicates that not only is it important for the DoD to replenish its workforce in terms of numbers, it is also important that it do so carefully, achieving a personnel mix with the appropriate qualifications and relevant work experience.

### 3. Opportunities

It is widely acknowledged that the pending retirement driven exodus may leave the acquisition workforce in dire straits. Yet, the silver lining for this

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<sup>18</sup> The Under Secretary of Defense (AT&L), *Shaping the Civilian Acquisition Workforce of the Future*, The Acquisition 2005 Task Force Final Report, October 2000.

particular cloud is that the DoD will have a good opportunity to rebuild its acquisition workforce to better meet future needs. Many of the bureaucratic battles typically associated with reshaping an existing large Government organizational body will not have to be fought. This is simply because those individuals that might otherwise resist organizational change will already have departed voluntarily.

There are several opportunities presented by the current scenario. First, and possibly most important, is that the DoD has the rare opportunity to significantly change its culture. There have been many seemingly good acquisition reform initiatives implemented only to eventually wither because the traditional Government culture has been reluctant to change and slow to truly embrace and implement innovative concepts.

Further diminishing the ability of the existing culture to adapt and overcome is the fact that many current personnel are holdovers from a different era. Their roots date back to an earlier time when reinventing Government, acquisition reform, revolution in business affairs, DAWIA and current reform initiatives were still far on the horizon. They typically rose through the ranks based on time in service rather than clearly outstanding performance, and they understood well the methods of traditional Government bureaucracy. For example, there are many current Contracting Officers that started their careers as clerks. They later moved into small purchasing positions, became Contract Specialists, and ultimately Contracting Officers and managers. Unfortunately, many do not have college educations and as a result frequently lack the ability to absorb and integrate complicated concepts, let alone dramatic change. Too often they are agents of the status quo, not the needed agents of change.

The acquisition workforce culture has been driven by reliance on what is familiar and what has worked in the past. As a result, individuals use existing regulation as roadblocks rather than opportunities to find creative ways to get things done. According Consulting Futurist, David P. Snyder, the new world (referring to the information age) requires new thinking. Traditional management

models that advocate keeping the job simple, rigid structure, quantification and management science, and centralized control should be abandoned. The current environment requires a different kind of employee. The information age necessitates that management determine priorities and then allow workers to best determine how to get the job done.<sup>19</sup> This is a clear shift from the traditional Government culture.

In addition to an opportunity to transform its culture, the DoD also has the rare opportunity to reshape its acquisition workforce to better fit the mission of the future. As the DoD struggles with the objectives of modernization and transformation in its total force structure it can carefully assess the gap between strategic requirements and existing capability, eliminate redundant programs and establish the optimal mix of job series and employment numbers to support the acquisition programs of the future. “As workload and nature of work change, the acquisition workforce must respond with new processes, flexible organizations, and employees prepared to adapt to future requirements”.<sup>20</sup>

The DoD must act smartly and promptly to take advantage of this rare window of opportunity. There are many reform initiatives already in place, the DoD can leverage off of them and now put teeth into their implementation. It can seize the moment and develop an efficient and accurate workforce model that reflects the current reality of an ever changing and unpredictable threat. The Department can redraw the lines to make the war-fighting machine lean and mean. At the same time, however, it can and must now re-examine and adjust as necessary its recruitment and retention strategy to ensure it is able to properly staff this new, optimal workforce model.

#### **4. Bottomline: Problems and Opportunities**

The end of the cold war delivered to the DoD repeated reduced budgets, and personnel downsizing. It must now pay the piper and face the demographic problem. A decade of cutbacks reduced the acquisition workforce by nearly 50%

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<sup>19</sup> Snyder, David P., Consulting Futurist, taken from Workforce 2005 Task Force Conference Notes, May 2000.

<sup>20</sup> The Under Secretary of Defense (AT&L), *Shaping the Civilian Acquisition Workforce of the Future*, The Acquisition 2005 Task Force Final Report, October 2000.

with another 50% in losses possible in 2005 if projected retirements actually occur. Despite all the bad press, however, the DoD is in a unique position to reinvent its acquisition workforce and rebuild its structure to accommodate the mission of the future.

It seems the DoD is aware that it must take advantage of this opportunity. It knows that it must move out smartly and ensure that its strategy is appropriate to attract and keep the types of individuals it needs. Leaders acknowledge that in order "To make this transformation successful, DoD must employ innovative approaches to recruiting, developing, and retaining its future workforce (Acquisition Taskforce 2005 Final Report)." However, does the current generation of DoD policy makers outlining the future recruitment and retention strategy truly understand what is important to their target audience? Does the DoD know what motivates and influences their behavior? Or are policy makers merely acting based on their own past experiences and not considering the realities of the current marketplace?

## C. UNDERSTANDING THE NEXT GENERATION OF RECRUITS

### 1. Introduction

The purpose of this section is to provide data that illuminates the characteristics of the next generation of recruits as compared with the current generation of policy makers (i.e. Generation X and Baby Boomers respectively).

It is important to first understand what constitutes a generation. According to Ron Zemke,

Social demographers use the term cohort to refer to people born in the same general time span who share key life experiences...a generation is defined by common tastes, attitudes, and experiences; a generational cohort is a product of its times and tastes. Those times encompass a myriad of circumstances – economic, social, sociological, and, of course, demographic. Particularly telling are a generation's defining moments: events that capture the attention and emotions of thousands – if not millions – of individuals at a formative stage in their lives. People have more in common than just age. They share memories of the same world-shaping events, same childhood heroes, and early work

experiences. And each generation shares many of the same attitudes toward work and leadership.<sup>21</sup>

The current work environment in the Government/DoD consists of four different generations. They are the Veterans or Matures (1922-1943), Baby Boomers (1944-1960), Generation X (1961-1980), and Generation Next or Y (1981 - onward). According to Zemke,

This is the first time so many different generations have worked side by side. To manage this diverse workforce, Government leaders must try to understand the mind-sets of different generations and how each group sees the world based on their experience.<sup>22</sup>

Nancy Pekala concurs,

Today's managers need to know and understand where their associates are coming from in order to coach them successfully, and ultimately to grow and retain them. This involves, first and foremost, understanding the differences that set each generation apart.<sup>23</sup>.

Also, in GenXers vs. Boomers vs. Matures by Jurkiewicz and Brown, it is learned

...the more accurately managers can assess what motivates their employees, the more effective they will be at maximizing productivity and enhancing performance, decreasing absenteeism and turnover, and inspiring work above and beyond what is asked of them...from the 1980s onward, knowledge of how the changing American value system affects incentives and the motivation to work hard would be a key requirement for entering the ranks of top management in public sector.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Zemke Ron. 2000. *Generations At Work, Managing the Clash of Veterans, Boomers, Xers, and Nexters in Your Workplace*. AMACOM Books.

<sup>22</sup> Kogan, Marcela. Bridging Across the Generational Divide in the Federal Workplace. Government Executive. September 2001. Quote Ron Zemke.

<sup>23</sup> Pekala Nancy, Conquering the Generational Divide, Journal of Property Management, December 2001.

<sup>24</sup> Jurkiewicz Carole and Brown Roger, GenXers vs. Boomers vs. Matures – Generational Comparisons of Public Employee Motivation, Review of Public Personnel Administration, Fall 1998.

The DoD acquisition workforce faces problems due in part to the behavior of the different generations being rooted in dissimilar social eras. Managers are struggling with methods to bridge the gap.

Boomers view Xers as disrespectful of rules and authority, lacking employer loyalty, and scornful of paying dues to move up the ladder. GenXers see Boomers as over-cautious and hierarchy-worshiping, overly influenced by their parents' Depression mentality (Jurkiewicz 2000).

So, workplace disconnects often occur because the cohorts view each other differently. Accordingly, DoD policy makers must understand generational differences to motivate, retain, and recruit quality employees in a competitive marketplace.

Over the past twenty years there has been a fair amount of research that constitutes the traditional school of thought, or standard view, related to the generation gap. In addition, however, starting in the late 1990's up to the current time there is a revisionist view emerging that runs contrary to much of the standard view conclusions. Both are discussed herein.

## **2. Standard View**

The standard view contends the current generation gap was created when Generation Xers first entered the workforce and has been widening ever since, currently Xers represent approximately 33% of the workforce (Jurkiewicz and Brown 1998). Nonetheless, Boomers outnumber Xers 2:1 and, for many years, generational conflict has been increased because Boomers held top positions, did not retire, and left little room for Xers to move up (Jurkiewicz (2000)).

There is a problem in the workplace...It is a problem of values, ambitions, views, mind-sets, demographics, and generations in conflict....The workforce is awash with the conflicting voices and views of the most age and value diverse workforce this country has known...The differences fester, cause tension, and lead to unnecessary, at times disabling, personal, departmental, and organizational conflict (Zemke 2000).

There are many explanations given for the source of the conflict, Table 3.1 highlights the defining characteristics of each generational group.

Table 3.1. Four Generations, From: Bridging Across the Generational Divide in the Federal Workplace, From: Zemke 2000).

#### **VETERANS 1922-1943**

This group, also known as Traditionalists, Matures or the Silent Generation, lived through the Great Depression and World War II. They tend to be stable, thorough, loyal, private and hard-working. They believe in paying ones dues, duty before pleasure and having patience. They trust leaders, respect authority, and value formal dress and communication. Contrary to popular belief, Veterans like to take training courses if the classes are handled properly, and many want to continue to work part time after they've retired. Research shows that these older workers are just as productive as young ones.

##### Messages that motivate Veterans:

"Your experience is respected here."

"It's valuable to the rest of us to hear what has-and hasn't-worked in the past."

"Your perseverance is valued and will be rewarded."

#### **BABY BOOMERS 1944-1960**

Unlike their Veteran parents, Boomers didn't have to endure economic hardships and could focus their energy on themselves. On the job, Boomers thrive on change and are willing to go the extra mile. They are optimistic, team-oriented and into wellness. Boomers in general put a premium on developing relationships, but many don't like facing conflict and are very sensitive about feedback. Boomers think they changed the world and nobody could do better.

##### Messages that motivate Boomers:

"You're important to our success."

"You're valued here."

"Your contribution is unique and important."

"We need you."

#### **GENERATION X 1961-1980**

Xers tend to be economically conservative because they grew up with double-digit inflation. They've seen their parents get laid off from jobs that were supposed to be secure, and won't rely on any institution for long-term security. Xers value the entrepreneurial spirit and will invest in their own development rather than the organizations'. This group is adaptable, techno-literate, independent and not intimidated by authority. On the other hand, many of them are impatient, inexperienced and cynical. They prefer to manage their own problems but seek continuous feedback. Xers seek a balance between work and play.

##### Messages that motivate Gen Xers:

"Do it your way."

"We've got the newest hardware and software."

"There aren't a lot of rules here."

"We're not very bureaucratic."

#### **GENERATION NEXT 1981 – onward**

Nexters grew up during the high-tech revolution and have never known a world without video games and CD players. They are tenacious, optimistic and even more technologically savvy than Generation Xers. Diversity, morality and street smarts are core values of this group. But they need supervision and structure to do well at work. Because they are so young, they have little experience dealing with people issues.

##### Messages that motivate Nexters:

"You'll be working with other bright, creative people."

"Your boss is in his (or her) 60s."

"You and your co-workers can help turn this company around."

"You can be a hero here."

Table 3.2 highlights key generational cohort perspectives related to fundamental aspects of the work environment. In general, the strongest attitudinal divide occurs between the Baby Boomers and Generation X. This is consistent with most research that cites the rift between Baby Boomers and Generation X as the source of most workplace controversy. According to J. Walker Smith, President of Yankelovich Partners, who conducts research on generational issues, the Veterans are often left out of analysis since “many of its members are now out of the mainstream workforce.”<sup>25</sup> This makes sense since the youngest Verteran would now be 59 years old. Likewise, Gen-Y is often grouped with Xers because they hold similar values, have not yet entered the workforce in large numbers, and have yet to define their generational behavior in the workplace. Therefore, this thesis will define the “generation gap” as existing between Boomers and Xers - lumping Veterans with Boomers and Yers with Xers.

Table 3.3 lists the early memories of both Xers and Boomers. Just from looking at the differing frames of reference it can be readily understood why the two groups often have difficulty understanding one another.

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<sup>25</sup> Author anonymous, Is the Boomer/Gen-X War Over?, HR Focus, May 2000.

Table 3.2. Making the Generation Connection, From: Nancy Pekala, Conquering the Generational Divide, Journal of Property Management.

	<b>Veterans</b>	<b>Boomers</b>	<b>Gen-X</b>	<b>Gen-Y</b>
<b>Leadership</b>	Remember Eisenhower as great leader.	Desire to lead but scorned by leaders	Distrustful of leaders; but want mentors.	Respectful of veterans
<b>Authority</b>	Respect authority and took direction well.	Desire teamwork, relations and bonding.	Distrust authority but respect mentors.	Mindful of authority.
<b>Loyalty</b>	Unspoken promise of loyalty.	Loyal until next job comes along.	Loyal to individuals not organizations	Too early to tell.
<b>Sacrifice</b>	Sacrifice defines this generation.	Sacrifice everything for job.	Sacrifice = wait > 1 min for web download.	Too early to tell.
<b>Teamwork</b>	Value teamwork.	Value teamwork.	Value virtual teams.	Too early to tell.
<b>Balance</b>	Forget work. Retirement is near.	Work less. More personal time.	Balance is critical.	Work = money to play.
<b>Time on Job</b>	40 hrs pr wk.	Workaholics.	As job requires.	Leave early when done.
<b>Flextime</b>	Flextime?	Wanted it but afraid to ask for it.	Demand it. Flextime is critical.	Require it.
<b>Multitasking</b>	Do one job very well over and over.	Stressed from so much work.	Retention = more valuable work projects.	I'm quitting when I get bored.
<b>Skill Building</b>	Trained already so just coast.	Afraid Xer will take my job.	Passport to success.	Necessary in order to be self-employed.
<b>Technology</b>	Changed landscape of country.	Microwaves are great! Tech makes life easier.	Allows me to process information quickly.	Lets me talk online to guy in Bangladesh.
<b>Rewards</b>	Pride in job well done.	Recognition in a big flashy way.	Time off is #1 incentive.	Responds to hero worship.

Table 3.3. Generation Differences, From: Pekala Nancy, Conquering the Generational Divide.

<b>Generation X</b>	<b>Baby Boomers</b>
Remembers the U channel and test pattern after midnight.	Remembers only 13 b/w channels and life before cable.
Watched Knight Rider, Scooby Doo and MTV.	Watched Amos/Andy; Honeymooners; Twilight Zone.
Wore out cassette tapes; now collects MP3s.	Wore out records, collects CDs.
Gatorade, Mexican food, Doritos, McD's	White Castle burgers, awful milkshakes, Good Humor ice cream truck.
First president remembered: Reagan	First president remembered: Eisenhower
Thompson Twins; Prince; Madonna; Springsteen	Elvis, Motown, Beatles, Janis Joplin, Joni Mitchell
Advice to Boomers: Grow up	Advice to Xers: Lighten up
Pac Man, Rubik's Cube, Garbage Pail Kids, comics	Howdy Doody doll, Davy Crockett coon-skin hat, hula hoops
Remembers when MTV played music.	Remembers when artists wrote their own songs instead of recycling 60s hits.

Mr. Gary O'Bannon listed various generational characteristics, forces of influence, values, attitudes and beliefs that help explain why the two generations have difficulties gelling in the workplace (partial listing with some amendments).<sup>26</sup>

1. Worldwide competition, MTV, AIDS, and new technological advancements every six months have shaped Generation X lives. They value flexibility, life options, and the achievement of balancing work and life issues. While money is important as an indicator of career performance, they are willing to sacrifice salary and status for more time to themselves and a greater variety of options. The younger Xers are even less agreeable to delaying their personal desires for the sake of the company.

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<sup>26</sup> O'Bannon Gary, Managing Our Future: The Generation X Factor, Public Personnel Management, Spring 2001.

2. Numerous environmental factors have negatively influenced Xers, such as over 40 percent are from broken families, with 12 percent of elementary and 30 percent of middle school children growing up as latchkey kids. This is triple the rate of previous decades. Check all the way through
3. During the years 1965 and 1977, the divorce rate doubled. Single parent homes became the norm, with more than 40 percent of today's young adults having spent time in a single-parent home by age 16. This has left psychological scars on many Xers, ranging from emotional instability to lack of mature oversight but, conversely, has made them self-reliant yet jaded survivors. In terms of intimate relationships, Gen Xers typically have sex at a younger age and marry later than any other generation of record. Since 1970, the average marriage age has moved up from 23 to 27 for men, and from 21 to 25 for women.
4. A peripheral trend among Xers is the decision to move back in with parents. Whether for economic or emotional reasons, 30 percent of men and women in their 20s live with their parents. For many Xers, the American Dream is a stable family.
5. Social issues heavily influenced those Boomers who began their work careers during the 1960s through the mid-1970s. The values of these individuals are grounded in their perception of the Vietnam War, the civil rights movement, and the style and class of John F. Kennedy. They were not materialistic but were more motivated by quality of life as opposed to counting possessions.
6. Material success and traditional values made a comeback in the workplace with those entering the workforce from the mid-1970s through the late-1980s. This philosophy was rooted in the Reagan administration's conservative policies and agenda, and double-income-no kids (DINKS) households. These workers, born toward the end of the baby-boom period, generally focus on the big picture as opposed to the individual parts. Terminal values, such as a sense of accomplishment and social recognition, rank high with this group.
7. When Xers complain about their dim financial prospects, many Boomers accuse them of being whiners. However, there appears to be validity in Xers' less-than-- optimistic outlook. For instance, between 1983 and 1992, the median weekly earnings of young men aged 16 to 24, who were full-time workers, fell nine percent and for women in the same age group slipped four percent in constant dollars.

8. Regarding education, Xers flock to two-and four-year colleges at record rates. The percentage of 18 to 24 year-olds currently enrolled in college, or having completed one or more years of college, was 54 percent in October 1992 - up from 43 percent a decade earlier. However, though Xers are the most college-bound generation ever, they are not necessarily the best educated. As of 1993, 24 percent of adults age 25-29 had bachelor's degrees - not much different from the 22 percent with such degrees in 1982. Therefore, while many appear committed to becoming formally educated, many have not attained the credentials necessary for higher earnings.

9. One emerging obstacle to successfully bridging the generation gap appears to be the lack of acceptance of Xers by Boomers. Boomers are described as self-absorbed, and this characteristic is contributing to workplace friction. Boomers are focusing on issues pertinent only to them, such as aging and retirement issues. They have not given much thought or effort to assisting Xers as they transition into the workforce.

10. In addition, Boomers have not had an easy time adjusting to the influx of young talent. Xers have a new way of approaching work, and companies are altering the workplace to match Xers' unique view of how work and life should intertwine. These changes include giving faster, more frequent feedback, time off for community service, flextime and telecommuting opportunities.

11. A PriceWaterhouseCoopers survey of 2,500 university students in 11 countries found 57 percent name "attaining a balance between personal life and career" as their primary career goal - up from 45 percent in 1997.

12. Boomer managers say they are experiencing problems with their younger employees. The most consistent observation by Boomers is that Xers are quick to capitalize on job opportunities elsewhere, if they do not get their way. Boomers tend to view this attitude as disloyal. Xers simply call it flexibility. Boomer-aged managers may have to realize these Xer-attributed characteristics simply mirror how Xers were raised and acknowledge that many Xers say their parent's loyalty to the firm meant nothing, when the company's bottom line was considered. In addition, Boomer managers view Xers as needing an excessive amount of workplace feedback, and describe them as undisciplined in their ability to delay gratification. Xers hold a job on average of 18 months.

13. A central theme among Xers is the struggle between work and leisure time. However, one thing is clear: Xers will not expect a

lifelong job with one company. Xers can be expected to have six or seven occupations in a lifetime. In the future, Xers, even more than Boomers, will have to be willing to return to school for retraining to handle ever changing work systems.

14. There is also a clash with the currently in-vogue team concepts that have been touted by consultant after consultant in the 90s decade. Xers bring a conflicting philosophy to the workplace: that of an individual contributor. They want to move on, not up the company hierarchy. Individualism is further displayed through the trend of fan attendance and participation in high school team sports being down, but participation in individual sports - such as golf, swimming, running, and cycling is up.

15. The evidence is clear: Work will be important to Xers, but not all consuming. Xers view themselves more as independent contractors rather than employees. While Xers may work hard to achieve the bottom line, they will not be swept away by talk of teamwork and corporate vision. Whether they are self-employed or not, the entrepreneurial spirit will be prominent among the X workforce.

16. This is further supported by studies that depict Xer's view of the high-tech creators of the search engine Yaboo!, Jerry Yang and David Filo, then 28 and 31, respectively, as strong role models because of their fearless risk taking and decision to take control of their own futures through entrepreneurship. Some marketing experts have caught on. In 1995, Prudential Insurance replaced its previous slogan, "Get a Piece of the Rock," with the snazzier moniker, "Be Your Own Rock." The Army changed its slogan from "Be All You Can Be" to "An Army of One". Not to be left behind, colleges and universities have expanded their course offerings in entrepreneurship. A recent University of Michigan study found that 25-to-34-year-olds are trying to start businesses at three times the rate of 35-to-55-year-olds. Xer childhood memories are haunting them, as they recall the selling out of their parents by former employers.

17. There are distinct differences in value systems between these generations, and even within generations. We have learned that values are important to the study of organizational behavior, because they lay the foundation for the understanding of attitudes and motivation, and because they influence our perceptions. Individuals enter an organization with preconceived notions of what "ought" and what "ought not" to be. As a result, values cloud objectivity and rationality and generally influence attitudes and behavior.

18. The Generation X, post-Baby Boomer generation - over 40 million strong - is the most underutilized human resource of the 1990s. A quarter century ago, kids called older people names. Now, the younger generation is on the receiving end of verbal abuse, and most are managed poorly because Boomer supervisors buy into the popular misperception of Xers being part of a "slacker" generation - believing Xers to be "disloyal," "arrogant," "cynical," and "lazy." In reality, they are probably not so much disloyal as self-interested. Regardless, these misperceptions cripple the ability of managers to bring out the best in Xers and rob companies of the innovations of a talented generation.

19. On a positive note, Xers may have the most profound effect on easing racial tensions in the workplace than any other in memory. This is the most diverse generation in American history. Gay people, interracial couples, people with mental challenges are all accepted by Xers. Seventy percent of Xers are white compared to 77 percent of Boomers. Compared to the entire population, 14 percent of African-Americans are Xers as opposed to 12 percent of the entire population. Twelve percent of Hispanics are Xers versus 9.5 percent of the entire population, and four percent of Asians are Xers as compared to three percent of the entire population.

20. A Kansas City, Missouri, survey supported a general attitude of tolerance. Eighty-four percent of respondents said that they were "OK with people who have sexual orientations different from mine." Broken down by gender, 88 percent of women agreed; 80 percent of men agreed (The Kansas City Star, 1997).

21. Similarly, nearly a third of Xers agree with the statement, "There is no single way to live." This equates to nearly twice as many affirmative respondents to this question as compared to a generation ago. In this generation, African-Americans, Hispanics, Asians and Native Americans proudly display aspects of their culture and identity more than ever. Whites are more multicultural. Gay rights are assumed.

22. Xers aren't more or less optimistic than other generations about their personal condition or the future of the country, nor do they feel they have been given the short end of the economic stick by their greedy parents. The Gallup Organization asked a random sample of Americans, "In general, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the way things are going in your own personal life?" Among those 18-29 years old, only 18 percent expressed dissatisfaction with their lives, compared to 22 percent of those 30 to 49 years old and 19 percent of those 50 or older.

23. A study by the United Nations International Labor Organization shows, U.S. workers put in more hours and spend more time on the job than any other industrialized nation's employees. However, the change in culture appears real. According to Greg Stephens, an associate professor of management at Texas Christian University in Fort Worth, fewer people are equating long hours at work with a high level of commitment.

In addition, the following suggestions may help Xers and Boomers communicate better and work more harmoniously (O'Bannon, 2001).

1. Boomer managers should:

Tap Xers' creativity by building an institutional climate that welcomes and values Xers as individuals capable of making valuable contributions.

Respect Xers' relationship with information technology.

Support Xers' style of thinking, learning and communicating, and respect the unique perspective they bring to the workplace.

Honor Xers' independence, and motivate Xers' innovative drive by granting more day-to-day autonomy and enough creative responsibility to imagine problems in their own terms.

Allow Xers to set priorities, make decisions, and even make mistakes.

Utilize communication systems that will respond to Xers need for feedback. This includes: providing Xers with regular guidance; keeping Xers "in the loop."; building managers' credibility with Xers; making coaching/training an essential responsibility in regular reviews; and linking performance evaluations directly with concrete action steps.

2. There are many companies that have already begun creating special diversity programs to cultivate what may appear to some to be the hidden potential Xers and reduce miscommunications and perceived motivations.

3. Some researchers are calling on companies to actively pursue ways to cultivate a work environment conducive to this group. For example, training sessions have altered styles to adapt to Xers. Trainers have learned to design sessions that are conducive to allowing plenty of time for questions and answers; allowing Xers to resolve problems addressed in breakout sessions; adding games

and fun activities to training programs; and displaying expertise on topics early on to get Xers' respect.

4. Though perhaps an oversimplification, some say all the controversy can be resolved, if supervisors and managers would just consistently support three mutually guiding principles: First, clarify what is important - clearly informing employees about business priorities. Second, support employees as a whole, recognize, and actually celebrate an employee's outside business commitments. Third, continually experiment with the way work is done, striving to improve performance while continuing to acknowledge an employee's personal pursuits. Unfortunately, according to at least one author, these managers are the exception and not the rule.

As a result of the findings of the standard view, many organizations are taking action to change policy and procedures to accommodate Xers. Observers of the generation gap have reached the conclusion that "Management needs to change."<sup>27</sup> and "If you can learn how to meet the needs of this segment of the workforce, you've got a heck of an advantage on your competitors, because most companies don't understand."<sup>28</sup> There are even calls for the Army to make itself "a fun place in which to work and live" since it is experiencing a high rate of attrition with its Gen X officers.<sup>29</sup>

No doubt, Generation Xers and Baby Boomers experience problems in the workplace as a result of the differing social factors that have formed their generational viewpoints. The standard view holds that there is a gap, it is ever widening, and that organizational policy must be amended to accommodate Xers. If not, large organizations will be less able to recruit the best personnel.

Could it be though, that possibly Xers have been misunderstood and, that in fact, they are not all that different from previous generations? There is some research that suggests just that.

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<sup>27</sup> Kupperschmidt Betty, Tips to Help you Recruit, Manage, and Keep Generation X employees, [www.nursingmanagement.com](http://www.nursingmanagement.com).

<sup>28</sup> Woker Craig, Luring Generation X with Opportunity Instead of stability, New Steel magazine, July 1999.

<sup>29</sup> Ricks Thomas, More Than Rank Splits Army's Stars and Bars; Study Says Generation Gap Drives Junior Officers Away, Creating Future Leadership Vacuum, The Washington Post, November 2000.

### **3. Revisionist View**

In contradiction to the standard view that the generation divide will be difficult to bridge, some research contends Xers are really not very different from Boomers - or any other generational cohort for that matter.

Dr. Carole L. Jurkiewicz has authored and co-authored several studies that indicate Xers and Boomers may not be all that different and, that as time passes, there may actually be a convergence of generational cohort attitudes and values. The end result may very well be an eclectic workplace environment that takes advantage of the most beneficial aspects of each group. The question then is

If there are more similarities than differences between the cohorts, could the trend toward designing human resource programs to specifically target GenXers be unnecessarily skewed toward a circumstance that exists only in the popular media (Jurkiewicz and Brown 1998)?

The answer to this question may be “yes”, and, as such, provide an explanation for some of the most expensive marketing mistakes in history. For example, Coca-Cola’s OK soda, Subaru’s punk rock slogans, and Converse’s spray-painting campaigns were all big failures.<sup>30</sup> In Richard Minter’s Generation X Does Business, it is stated that Generation X “may be one of America’s most energetic”, and Jurkiewicz’s article states “...contrary to general beliefs, GenXers are actually more competitive, risk-taking, and success-minded than either Boomers or Matures (Jurkiewicz and Brown 1998)”.

Contrary to existing literature and stereotypes, Jurkiewicz found that among 241 Xer and Boomer employees in the public sector there was a similar pattern of what employees want from their jobs. In fact, of the 15 work-related motivational factors surveyed, only three areas (considered to be areas of personal growth) were found to have a ranking difference of statistical significance. That means for 80% of the factors surveyed Xers and Boomers

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<sup>30</sup> Goh Eddie, Marketing to the “Cybergen” – Great Xpectations, [www.one1.com](http://www.one1.com).

hold similar values. Table 3.4 lists the fifteen work-related motivational factors, and Table 3.5 lists the factors of statistical significance (Jurkiewicz 2000).

Assuming the sample accurately represents the Government/DoD generational cohorts, the next logical question regards public employee job satisfaction levels. This has major implications not only as a selling point in recruitment but also provides insight into whether retention will be a significant concern in the years ahead.

Table 3.4. Work-Related Motivational Factors, From: Generation X and the Public Employee.

Fifteen Work-Related Motivational Factors
A stable and secure future
Chance to learn new things
Chance to engage in satisfying leisure activities (e.g. recreational, cultural)
Chance to exercise leadership
Chance to use my special abilities
Chance to make a contribution to important decisions
Chance to benefit society
Freedom from supervision
Freedom from pressures to conform both on and off the job
Friendly and congenial associates
High salary
High prestige and social status
Opportunity for advancement
Variety in work assignments
Working as part of a team

Table 3.5. Statistical Differences in Ranking Factors, From: Generation X and the Public Employee.

Mann-Whitney-U Analysis of Differences in Rank For Public Sector GenXers and Boomers				
Subject Type	Sample Size	Mean Rank	U-Stat	p-value
		Sum***		
Chance to learn new things				
Gen X	63	98.14	4167	.002**
Boomer	178	129.09		
Freedom from pressures to conform both on and off the job				
Gen X	63	104.41	5462	.023*
Boomer	178	126.87		
Freedom from supervision				
Gen X	63	141.43	4320	.007**
Boomer	178	113.77		

\* significant at .05 level; \*\* significant at .01 level

\*\*\* The mean rank sum is the sum of the ordered ranks associate with a variable, divided by its respective number of observations. It is a measure of difference considered to be a much more powerful and conservative indicator than the median test.

A study by Jurkiewicz, Massey, and Brown using the same fifteen work-related motivational factors compared what different groups of employees wanted and believed they received from their jobs.<sup>31</sup> In the study, the Spearman's rank order correlation for public employees was .65 ( $p < .05$ ). In order to understand that figure,

A Spearman's coefficient of 0 would indicate that there is no association (correlation) between the two sets of rankings. On the other hand, a coefficient of 1 would indicate that the two rankings are identical. The null hypothesis in the Spearman's rank correlation coefficient is that there is no (zero) similarity between the rankings of the two groups, so levels of significance with a p

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<sup>31</sup> Jurkiewicz Carole, Massey Tom, Brown Roger, Motivation In Public And Private Organizations – A Comparative Study, Public Productivity & Management Review, March 1998.

value of .05 or less indicate a level of association that is significantly different from zero (Jurkiewicz, Massey, Brown 1998).

It is interesting to note that this study found that public employees could be considered more satisfied than private sector employees. Private sector employees had a Spearman's rank correlation coefficient of .40 ( $p < .20$ ). Table 3.6 lists the responses provided by the Government employees.

Table 3.6. Comparison of Public Employee "Wants" and "Gets", From: Motivation in Public and Private Organizations<sup>32</sup>.

A comparison of "wants" and "gets" ranking of motivational factors by public sector employees			
Public Sector "Wants"		Public Sector "Gets"	
Rank	Motivational Factor	Rank	Motivational Factor
1	A stable and secure future	1	Chance to learn new things
2	Chance to learn new things	2	Variety in work assignments
3	Chance to use my special abilities	3	Chance to use my special abilities
4	High salary	4	A stable and secure future
5	Opportunity for advancement	5	Working as a part of a team
6	Variety in work assignments	6	Chance to benefit society
7	Working as a part of a team	7	Friendly and congenial associates
8	Chance to make a contribution to important decisions	8	Chance to make a contribution to important decisions
9	Friendly and congenial associates	9	Chance to exercise leadership
10	Chance to benefit society	10	Freedom from supervision
11	Chance to exercise leadership	11	Opportunity for advancement
12	Freedom from supervision	12	Freedom from pressures to conform both on and off the job
13	Freedom from pressures to conform both on and off the job	13	Chance to engage in satisfying leisure activities
14	Chance to engage in satisfying leisure activities	14	High salary
15	High prestige and social status	15	High prestige and social status

Jurkiewicz summarizes several interesting points that can be extended to the acquisition workforce. Significantly,

it dispels the notion that generational differences are the sole determiners of work motivation, and suggests that what employees

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<sup>32</sup> Jurkiewicz Carole, Massey Tom, Brown Roger, Motivation In Public And Private Organizations – A Comparative Study, Public Productivity & Management Review, March 1998.

really want from their jobs is very different from what many believe they want. Regardless of generational affiliation, employees tend to share the same concerns and needs as they progress...Developing performance initiatives that speak to employees' career stage as opposed to generational differences can more effectively target recruitment, productivity, and retention efforts. Collectively these findings suggest that attention and effort has heretofore been placed on an aspect of human resource management that doesn't warrant it (Jurkiewicz 2000).

She concludes that Xers may have a different conception of "wealth" that is not measured in material aspects but rather in terms of the balanced, whole individual. Xers value family, health, personal growth, and social commitment. Surprisingly Xers participate in volunteer work much more than Boomers. GenXers may actually be the ideal Government employee since, as it turns out, their social profile provides a good match for the characteristics normally associated with public employees: job security and stability, teamwork, and service to society (Jurkiewicz 2000).

In addition to the findings that indicate there is not a significant difference between what Xers and Boomers want from their jobs; and that public employees are generally a satisfied bunch, there are indications from experts in the field that Generation X may prove to make a valuable social impact despite the contrary standard view.

An article in the Los Angeles Times entitled "The True Great Generation" indicates Generation X has begun to reverse the negative trends of the previous generation despite what might otherwise have been expected. The article cited the following GenX social trends:

Teenage drug-abuse deaths plummeted from 200 to 30 a year; felony arrests dropped 50%; property crime plunged 60%; drunken-driving fatalities fell from 300 to fewer than 100 annually; cigarette smoking declined 40%; suicidal deaths decreased from 600 to fewer than 300 annually; pregnancy dropped 20%; and sexually transmitted diseases declined by half. Even amid crowded, under-funded schools, Gen-Xers' 1998 Scholastic Aptitude Test scores were, on average, 15 points above boomers' 1975...Crime rates among the state's poorest black and Latino youths dropped to levels below those of the 1970s. Imprisonment of young black men

fell 35% during the 1990s and young blacks today are only one-third as likely to take his own life as their 1970 counterpart... Millennial teens are extending Gen-X improvements. The latest--1999--statistics show record lows: suicide, lowest level since 1959; homicide, lowest since 1967; violent and other felony crime, lowest since 1967; drug deaths, a bit higher than Gen-Xers' but still 80% below boomers' rates; violent death, lowest ever; and birth rates, lowest since 1940.<sup>33</sup>

If California's statistics represent the country as a whole, the revelation is quite startling. Despite continual "praise of 'family values'" Boomers constitute America's most family-destroying adults ever (Males 2001)." Boomers are quick to slander Xers but it seems they need to take a look in the mirror. Xers are erasing the social decadence Boomers initiated and compensating "for their Boomer parents' disarray by assuming more adult responsibilities at younger ages and refusing to emulate their elders' excesses (Males 2001)."

The standard view may be right but the revisionist view provides persuasive evidence to the contrary, only time will tell which is correct. Most likely there will be give and take on either side. The next section addresses Xer attitudes towards and alternatives to employment in the acquisition workforce.

#### **4. Attitude and Alternatives to Public Employment**

Understanding social factors at play in the workplace is important. It is also important to know how the target audience perceives working for the DoD and who is competing to recruit the same talent pool.

As previously noted, generational values and attitudes are significantly influenced by events, both good and bad, during the younger more impressionable years. As it turns out, GenX has been given reason to distrust bureaucracies, especially the Government, and instead have developed strong individualistic survival skills.

The Clinton scandals, corporate layoffs, as well as reports of institutional corruption, ineptness and breakdown have undermined public trust in major institutions. Xers are not alone; all age groups show a lack of trust in the

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<sup>33</sup> Males Mike, The True "Great Generation", The Los Angeles Times, August 2001.

Government. In a recent Washington Post-ABC News poll, 27% of 18 to 29 year olds; 19% of 30 – 44 year olds; 20% of age 45 – 59; and 26% of those 60 or older said they expected Government to do what's right all or most of the time (Morin 1994). So in other words, the public anticipates that about 75% of the time the Government will not do what is right.

In 1988 the National Commission on Public Service concluded that student interest in public life had eroded, and that "the public sector is not perceived as a place where talented people can get ahead. Few top graduates feel the Federal Government can offer good pay and recognition for performance. Fewer still say a Federal job can be challenging and intellectually stimulating"<sup>34</sup>. Federal civil service employment evokes unfavorable impressions from top caliber students. They see public work as a source of decent benefits and job security but little else that is positive. Poor pay is a constant theme. Yet, even for those students attracted to Federal employment for intrinsic reasons, many have "no idea how to apply for a Federal job and think the process is long and burdensome" (Brintnall 2002). Although Xers desire to make society better, they won't take a job in Government. A Brookings Institute survey indicates that Xers "think a Government job is a perfectly reasonable way to start a career, just not for them" individually. And so went Xer public opinion until September 11, the day America was attacked.

After the bombings, despite what critics might have expected, Xers have come together and displayed a high level of patriotism, solidarity, and confidence. In the wake of the aftermath, while Boomers predicted a country never again safe, Xers volunteered to help, held peace vigils, and attended mourning services in large numbers. There have been comparisons to the impact Pearl Harbor had on the Veteran/Mature generation. Possibly this is the first time Xers have had their character visibly tested

But the history books will show that Xers shined during this horrific episode...Most of the firefighters, rescue workers and police were

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<sup>34</sup> Brintnall Michael and Newcomer Kathryn, Calling Students to Public Service Careers, [www.naspaa.org](http://www.naspaa.org).

probably Generation X...Generation X is a much criticized generation, but one that has the ability to get things done and not just talk about it (Fernandez 2001).<sup>35</sup>

Immediately after the attacks there was a public rush to join the military, CIA, FBI and other law enforcement and intelligence agencies, however, this could merely represent a societal knee jerk reaction and not a long term trend that attitude towards Government employment has changed. Regardless, law enforcement and intelligence work is different from the types of functions performed by the acquisition workforce. It seems only time will tell if a sustained attitude change towards the Government has taken place.

In order to effectively recruit the acquisition workforce of the future, the DoD needs to be aware of the choices available to Xers as they come out of college. Since most entry-level workers have limited work experience, typically their key decision point in selecting between jobs is starting salary. Although exceptions for brilliant or skilled individuals exist, Table 3.7 lists major career fields and corresponding entry-level salaries for new college graduates with a bachelor's degree. GS-5 and 7 grades (including average locality adjustments) have been added to the table to show how Government professional level entry pay compares. Many Government entry-level college graduates start as a GS-5 with a bachelor's degree or GS-7 with a master's degree. This table shows year 2000 wages for both private and public sectors.

Based on the Table 3.7, an entry-level GS-5 earns 37% less than the average entry-level private wage and a GS-7 earns 22% less. Thus, all other criteria being equal the Government does not offer a competitive salary to attract recent graduates.

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<sup>35</sup> Fernandez Maria Elena, America Attacked – While Baby Boomer Fear a Society Forever Changed, Young Americans Display a Resolve to Rebound, The Los Angeles Times, September 2001.

Table 3.7. Comparison of Starting Salaries, From: Educaid and GS Pay Table.

<b>PROFESSION</b>	<b>SALARY</b>
Accounting and Finance	\$35,591
Business and Management	\$36,041
Clerical and Secretarial	\$27,499
Communications/Media	\$28,802
Computers	\$46,765
Education	\$38,999
Engineering	\$47,001
Sales and Marketing	\$34,840
Social Services	\$29,635
Other	\$32,178
Average Private Pay	\$36,259
GS - 5	\$22,819
GS - 7	\$28,265

## 5. Summary

Many social factors contribute to the attitudes and values held by generational cohorts. These in turn are manifested in workplace behavior. When group behaviors do not match, such as with the Boomers and Xers, generation gaps form.

A majority of research concludes that Boomers and Xers are fundamentally different, and that organizational policies should be significantly revised in order to recruit and retain them. Other research, however, concludes Xers and Boomers are more similar than different, and that as time passes the Boomer and Xer culture will converge. Thus significant changes in personnel policy are unwarranted.

In addition, Xer social behavior is defining this generation in positive terms. They perform volunteer service and are reversing many adverse social trends associated with the Boomer generation. In fact, since the recent terrorist

attacks, comparisons with the Pearl Harbor/Veteran generation are being made. However, it's too early to know if that will last long. If it does, it may work to the acquisition and federal workforce's advantage since college graduate recruits generally hold a negative impression of Government work.

## **D. RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION TOOLS**

### **1. Introduction**

It is not enough for managers to understand the demographic problem and the generational factors impacting the acquisition workforce. In order to succeed at recruitment and retention, they must also be aware of available tools to assist in their efforts. Of concern is the notion that many managers are deficient in this area (Workforce 2005 Task Force conference notes). Accordingly, this final portion of Chapter III identifies key tools plus new initiatives still on the horizon.

The recently released DoD Acquisition Managers Recruiting, Hiring and Retention Handbook was designed to fill the knowledge voids of acquisition workforce managers. It contains useful information on human resources planning, recruitment, and retention. It refers to human resources planning as the process of looking at future organizational needs and then designing human resource efforts (workload distribution, labor type, grade levels, training programs etc.) to meet that future need. Recruitment is described as a continual process designed to allow organizations to bring on-board quality candidates. Hiring, on the other hand, is the specific action taken to bring personnel into an organization. Retention involves both the obvious and the less noticeable things organizations can do to keep good people on the job<sup>36</sup>.

The manager's handbook catalogs available tools for use in recruitment and retention and shows that there are a variety of options. It would be redundant for this thesis to explain each tool in detail so a brief description taken and modified from the manual is provided instead.

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<sup>36</sup> U.S. Department of Defense, Acquisition Managers Recruiting, Hiring and Retention Handbook.

## **2. Existing Tools**

### **a. *Recruitment***

Job Announcements/Area of Consideration (AOC): Merit promotion vacancy announcements are the most common method of publicizing job opportunities for employees already in the federal government. However, a variety of job search locations should also be considered (e.g. college placement centers, Internet Web sites, etc.)

Partnerships with Colleges and Universities: Establish long-term relationships with local universities to provide a continual source of fresh candidates.

USAJOBS: OPM operated. It provides job vacancy information (thousands worldwide), employment fact sheets, job applications/forms, and on-line resume development and electronic transmission capabilities.

Commercial Recruiting Firms and Nonprofit Employment Services: Used when normal recruitment does not locate well-qualified candidates – some restrictions apply. Check alignment all the way through

### **b. *Short-Term Hiring***

**Details:** Temporary assignments usually used to meet temporary shifting workload demands, cover extended employee absences, or as part of training.

**Temporary Promotions:** Movement of a current employee to a higher graded position for a specified time, up to 5 years. Qualification and eligibility requirements still apply.

**Temporary Limited Appointments:** Used to meet short-term needs not expected to exceed 1 year (e.g. special projects, heavy workload, uncertain funding, reorganization). Extendable up to a total of 2 years.

**Term Appointments:** Non-permanent appointments exceeding 1 year but that are clearly not of a continuing nature and will terminate upon completion of the work.

**Intergovernmental Personnel Act (IPA) Assignments:** Allow noncompetitive temporary assignment of personnel between the federal, state and local governments, and other eligible organizations (e.g. universities, and R&D centers). Used to provide technical expertise on work of mutual benefit and concern. Assignments are up to 2 years and extendable.

**Consultant and Expert Employment:** Used to gain expertise on an irregular basis or under temporary appointments for up to 1 year (extendable). However, they cannot perform managerial work nor fill in during staff shortages or do work normally performed by the agency's regular employees.

**Commercial Temporary Help:** Used to provide short term and intermittent assistance for brief periods (120 days, extendable) when there is a critical need to have work performed that cannot be met through regular recruitment and hiring procedures.

**Critical Hiring Needs Appointments:** Provide temporary (30 day, extendable) appointments where a critical hiring need exists and examining for the position is impractical, as determined by OPM. Includes positions that filled on an interim basis pending completion of competitive examining, clearances, or other procedures required for a longer appointment.

**Special Hiring Authorities for People Who Have Recovered from Mental Illness:** Noncompetitive appointments for individuals disadvantaged in obtaining employment because of a documented psychiatric disability and who have had a significant period of substantially disrupted employment because of the disability. Employment under this authority may not exceed 2 years following each significant period of mental illness.

**Other Excepted Service** - Schedule A Agencies may make appointments to specific short-term positions which are not of a confidential or policy-determining character, and which are not in the Senior Executive Service and for which it is not practicable to examine.

**c. Long-Term Hiring**

Long-term hiring refers to career or career-conditional appointments that are permanent, tenured appointments in the competitive civil service. A career-conditional appointment leads to career tenure after 3 years of continuous service.

**Delegated Examining:** DoD is authorized by OPM to conduct competitive rating, ranking, and referral for selection for appointment (career, career-conditional, and term) to specific titles, series, and grades and for specific geographic locations.

**Placement of Current or Former Employees:** Achieved through competitive Promotion; non-competitive Reassignment; non-competitive Repromotion (employee must have previously and permanently held the grade level and not been demoted for cause); non-competitive Transfer (from other federal agencies at same grade level); non-competitive Reinstatement of former federal employee (if retired annuitant's salary is reduced by the amount of their annuity unless a waiver is requested and approved).

**Special Appointments for Veterans:** Achieved non-competitively by eligible Veterans Readjustment Appointments (VRAs) up through GS- 11 grade level; 30%-or-More-Disabled Veteran Program enables non-competitive hire of eligible veterans; Disabled Veterans Eligible for Training enables enlistment into training programs that can lead to a permanent appointment; Veterans' Employment Opportunity Act (VEOA) opens up closed agency "status" announcements to veterans.

**Outstanding Scholar Program:** Enables direct hire of individuals into entry-level administrative occupations on the basis of high academic achievement (usually GPAs over 3.5). Used only for specific series and job titles for a range of administrative occupations and is restricted to grade levels GS-5 and GS-7.

**Bilingual/Bicultural Authority:** Allows appointment into certain entry-level administrative occupations based on obtaining a passing score on an

examination without regard to rank. The job must require interaction with the public or have job performance enhanced by bilingual or bicultural skills. Used only for specific series and job titles for a range of administrative occupations and is restricted to grade levels GS-5 and GS-7.

**Special Hiring Authorities for People with Disabilities:**

Excepted service appointing of individuals with severe physical, cognitive, or psychiatric disabilities or a history of such. Allows employee to demonstrate the potential to perform essential duties of position. After 2 years of satisfactory service, employee may be converted to competitive appointment.

**Student Educational Employment Program:** Open to students taking at least a half-time academic or vocational and technical, course load in an accredited high school, technical or vocational school; a 2-year or 4-year college or university; or a graduate or professional school. The program has two components:

**Student Temporary Employment Program (STEP) –**

Enables the temporary appointment of students for up to 1 year (renewable) to perform work that doesn't have to relate to the student's academic field of study. These students cannot be converted to permanent appointment.

**Student Career Experience Program (SCEP) -**

Enables temporary appointment of students that agencies can convert to permanent appointments. The work has to relate to the student's academic field of study. The program provides formal periods of work and study throughout the year while students are attending school.

**Student Volunteer Service:** Enables student volunteers under limited situations to offer unpaid training opportunities to students in high school or college.

**Federal Career Intern Program:** Designed to attract exceptional individuals into a variety of occupations at grade levels GS-5, -7, and -9. Agencies provide at least 2 years of formal training.

**Presidential Management Intern (PMI) Program:** A two-year internship used to non-competitively appoint graduate-degree students for work in the field of public policy and programs. Allows hiring at the GS-9 level and non-competitive promotions to GS-11 and 12 after one year and completion of program, respectively.

**d. Offers to Sweeten the Pot**

**Tuition Assistance:** For students hired under the Student Career Experience Program (SCEP), enables the payment of tuition, books etc. Student must agree to a period of obligated service in return.

**Highest Previous Rate:** Enables previous federal employees to get their “highest previous rate” of pay not to exceed the top pay of the grade of the new appointment.

**Travel and Transportation Expenses:** Enables travel and transportation expenses to be paid for pre-employment interviews and new appointee posting to first duty station.

**Dual-Compensation Waiver:** Allows rehired retiree to collect both full retirement pay and a full paycheck. Normally used to meet temporary emergency hiring needs or when exceptional difficulty in recruiting or retaining a qualified candidate exists. Waiver requests require extensive justification and rarely are approved.

**Recruitment Bonuses:** Enables lump-sum recruitment bonus of up to 25% of annual pay to newly appointed employee to a difficult-to-fill position. Requires a six months remain-in-service agreement.

**Superior Qualifications Appointments:** Enables a higher starting salary (steps 2 - 10) within a grade on the basis of superior qualifications or special needs of the agency. Normally offers are made at step-1 level.

**Student Loan Repayment:** Enables repayment of all or part of a student loan for a DoD employee appointed to an acquisition position.

**e. *Retention***

**Cash Awards:** One-time, lump-sum awards based on performance ratings or other agency contribution.

**Time-Off Awards:** Time off from work with pay as a reward.

**Career Ladders:** Establishes career development programs with hiring at entry level, training, and non-competitive promotions to the journeyman level.

**Quality Step Increase:** Enables a step increase to employee pay when the highest performance appraisal rating has been achieved.

**f. *Training***

**Job-Related Training:** Managers may approve any training or education that improves individual or organizational performance.

**Reimburse Training and Education Costs:** Enables all or partial payment for training and education either before or after it has been completed.

**Pay for Academic Degree:** Enables payment for training leading to an academic degree when necessary to help recruit or retain employees in shortage occupations. This program is an exception to a continuing statutory prohibition against training civilians for the sole purpose of obtaining a degree.

**Executive Leadership Development Program (ELDP):** A 60 member class of GS-12 and 13s. ELDP provides participants with an extensive exposure to DoD's roles and missions.

**The Defense Leadership and Management Program (DLAMP):** DLAMP is a systematic program of "joint" civilian leader training, education, and development at the GS-12, 13, 14 grade level. It provides civilians with a DoD-wide capability to serve in key leadership positions.

**Rotational Assignments:** DAWIA and DoD policy encourage acquisition workforce development through experiential assignments in multiple functions and organizations.

**Cross-Training:** Cross-training into other acquisition career fields is encouraged.

**Retention Allowances:** Used to retain critical skills when the employee would be likely to leave federal service without the allowance. Allows continuing payments of up to 25% of basic pay to individual employees and up to 10% of basic pay to a group or category of employees.

**Relocation Bonuses:** Enables a lump-sum relocation bonus, up to 25% of annual basic pay, to an employee who must relocate to accept a difficult-to-fill position in a different commuting area.

**Flexible Working Conditions:** Includes job-sharing, intermittent appointments, flexible work schedules, part-time hires, and telecommuting.

### 3. Initiatives Underway

#### a. *Immediate Changes*

##### **Initiative #1—Develop and Implement Comprehensive, Needs-based Human Resource Performance Plans for the Civilian Acquisition Workforce**

This entails developing annual performance plans with specific goals based on the current workforce. This data is projected into the future to account for demographic and mission changes and compared against the people and skills needed to accomplish future mission requirements. In addition, workforce-planning models need to be developed (similar to existing military models). The model will be used to prepare needs analysis and demand reports that address workforce sizing, retirement, demographics, career fields, grades, and defining recruiting needs.

##### **Initiative #2—Maximize Use of Existing Hiring Authorities**

Make full use of all existing hiring authorities and processes, including Delegated Examining, Term Appointment authority, SEEP, PMI, Outstanding Scholar, and Federal Intern Programs. Maximum delegation of authority to authorize recruitment bonuses, retention allowances, and pay-setting whenever possible is advocated.

**Initiative #3—Maximize Use of Existing Authorities to Make Pay More Competitive**

Make initial offers and salaries more competitive with the private sector by maximizing use of available pay-setting and bonus authorities (Superior Qualification Appointments, recruitment and relocation bonuses, and student loan payback authority).

**Initiative #4—Expand Public and Private Sector Recruiting Efforts, and Make It Easier to Apply for DoD Acquisition Positions**

Expand recruiting efforts to encompass all sources—industry, academia, DoD, and other federal agencies—and make it easier for qualified candidates to apply for DoD acquisition positions. Structure job announcements and screening criteria so that those candidates outside the organization, command, or agency can also qualify for selected positions.

**Initiative #5—Maximize Use of the Student Educational Employment Program (SEEP) to Recruit from Colleges and Other Sources**

Target college and university students with critical skills early in their student years as part of DoD's advertising strategy. Structure summer employment to showcase the challenging opportunities in acquisition careers for after graduation.

**Initiative #6—Provide Timely Certification Training**

In accordance with DAWIA, provide training required for certification in a timely manner. This can be done by: managing training quotas, aggressively; promoting DAU alternative courses, and expanding the use of distance and Web-based learning.

**Initiative #7—Provide More Career-Broadening Opportunities**

Provide career-broadening opportunities for Level II and III certified professionals through rotational assignments. Assignments should be for a minimum of 1 year. Allow employees to select local area (primary) or geographic mobility/rotation options. Promote rotations: within Agencies, DoD, and other federal agencies.

### **Initiative #8—Increase Use of Employee Incentive Programs**

Increase use of employee incentive programs focusing on rewarding individual and team performance: recognition and awards, gain sharing, and Quality Step Increases (QSIs).

### **Initiative #9—Ensure a Work-Friendly Environment**

Maximize the use of alternative work schedules (including flexible work hours and compressed work schedules), and telecommuting for all levels of employees.

### **Ongoing Initiatives**

#### **Automate the Hiring Process**

Continue efforts to automate the hiring process throughout the acquisition workforce via automated referral systems and resume databases.

#### **The Acquisition Workforce Personnel Demonstration Project**

The Demo Project is designed to enhance the quality, professionalism, and management of the acquisition workforce by providing a revised human resources management system. It provides managers the authority, control, and flexibility to manage the workforce in response to changing market conditions.

The Demo is designed to retain, recognize, and reward employees for their contribution. Key features include streamlined hiring, broad-banding, a simplified classification system, and a contribution-based compensation and appraisal system. The project also offers Delegated Examining Authority and modified term appointments that give organizations greater control over the hiring process.

Broad-banding combines numerous occupational series into three career paths and groups several grade levels into pay bands with no steps.

The simplified classification system replaces OPM classification standards with six contribution factors and replaces multiple position descriptions with generic position requirements documents.

Through annual performance evaluations, the contribution-based system links employees' compensation to their on-the-job contributions.

**b. Near Term Initiatives**

**Initiative #10—Promote DoD's Challenging Work and Rewarding Opportunities**

Develop and implement a comprehensive advertising program to inform the general public about DoD and the challenging career opportunities available in its Acquisition Workforce.

**Initiative #11—Develop Acquisition Workforce Recruiting Programs**

Develop comprehensive recruiting programs for the Acquisition Workforce that recognize the continued need for workforce diversity. These programs should include: Developing local recruiting strategies; providing training in recruitment techniques; developing recruitment materials; forming partnerships with universities; establish an employee recruitment incentive program.

**Initiative #12—Establish a Scholarship Program for the Acquisition Community**

Establish a summer scholarship program at the undergraduate and graduate levels that provides rotational and progressive summer assignments throughout a curriculum and a permanent position upon graduation.

**Initiative #13—Establish a Central DoD Acquisition Career Management Web Site**

Establish an acquisition workforce website that identifies job vacancies, promotes DoD jobs, and informs interested parties.

**Initiative #14—Develop a Functional Manager's Recruiting, Hiring, and Retention Handbook**

This has been accomplished and is referenced in this thesis.

**Initiative #15—Reengineer the Hiring Process**

Reengineer the hiring process in order to streamline hiring and reduce cycle time - revise and waive impeding policies to swift hiring.

**Initiative #16—Assess Competition on a Location-by-Location Basis**

Conduct initial and on-going studies that assess private sector competition in the 10 acquisition population centers so that managers understand better their local recruitment market.

**Initiative #17—Develop a Mechanism for Acquisition Certification of Private Sector Accessions**

Establish a mechanism for assessing experience, education, and training of non-public employees so that appropriate levels of certification can be provided quickly.

**Initiative #18—Rehire Federal Annuitants Without Financial Offset**

Obtain local authority to rehire federal retirees with no decrement to retirement pay to retain qualified candidates and experience.

**Initiative #19—Establish Career Paths to Achieve Multifunctional Acquisition Professionals**

Promote employees obtaining multifunctional acquisition career certifications throughout their careers.

**Initiative #20—Increase Civilian Leadership Developmental Opportunities**

Provide more civilian leadership development opportunities by: offer leadership training at each grade level; designate select positions as “leadership opportunities” and provide rotations to promising personnel; identify senior management acquisition leadership positions; enable competition among multiple functional disciplines for key positions; compete acquisition leadership positions between military and civilians; expand the DLAMP program to include junior grades and a non-governmental rotational assignment.

**Initiative #21—Assess the Effect of FERS on the DoD Workforce**

Assess the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) to determine whether changes are needed to be more effective in the evolving

marketplace. This initiative increases DoD's ability to transfer and retain critical knowledge in the civilian workforce.

**Initiative #22—Component Assessment of High-Grade Requirements**

Review high-grade ratios to enable promotions for personnel performing at the higher level.

**Initiative #23—Improve Management of Personnel Lapse Rates**

Develop metrics to assess lapse rates (the gap time until a personnel vacancy is refilled) and manage more closely.

**Initiative #24—Conduct Entrance and Exit Surveys**

Conduct entrance and exit surveys to determine where problems exist to allow the adjustment of recruiting, hiring, and retention efforts

**Initiative #25—Establish a Program to Share Best Practices within the Acquisition Workforce**

Establish a DoD Acquisition Workforce program that solicits, recognizes, and shares “best practices” across the Acquisition Workforce.

**Ongoing Initiatives:**

**Fields** **Establish Career Development Plans for All Acquisition Career Fields**

Establish requirements for advancing to each career level.

**Specialists** **Establish Special Pay Rates for Information Technology Specialists**

Allow special pay to attract and retain information technology specialists.

**c. Long-Term (Requires Legislative Authority) Initiatives**

**Initiative #26—Convert Term Appointments to Permanent Appointments Non-Competitively**

Seek authority to offer term appointments that can lead to noncompetitive conversion to permanent positions. This ability would be an important recruiting and work-force shaping tool.

**Initiative #27—Establish a DoD/Industry Two-way Exchange Program**

Create a two-way one to two year exchange program between government and the private sector. Participants would continue to be reimbursed by their respective employers and accrue seniority as though in their original positions.

**Initiative #28—Encourage Job Mobility, Both Local and Geographic**

Obtain legislative authority to permit mobility across occupations and organizations to broaden careers. Includes provisions to assist in spousal employment in the new location and funding or retirement moves.

**Initiative #29—Assess DoD Acquisition Workforce Personnel Management Authorities**

Assess the need for additional DoD authorities for civilian Acquisition Workforce personnel policy and procedures.

**Initiative #30—Allow Employees to Buy Down the Early Retirement Penalty**

Allow employees the option to offset all or part of the penalty for early retirement by making voluntary contributions to the Civil Service Retirement and Disability Fund (CSRDF). Under this authority, employees would have the option to transfer VSIP, lump sum annual leave, and other funds directly to the CSRDF. This ability would provide an additional force-shaping tool.

**Initiative #31—Maximize Use of Return Home Visit Authority for Temporary Duty (TDY) Employees and Permit Spouse Travel As an Alternative**

Require managers to plan for, fund, and authorize return home visits for employees on long-term temporary duty. Seek legislative authority to permit spouses to visit employees at the TDY location.

**Ongoing Initiatives:**

**Increase Bonus Ceilings**

Increase the proportion of salary that can be used for recruitment, retention, and relocation bonuses from 25 percent to 50 percent of base salary.

**Permit Initial Conversion of 401K Plans and Allow Immediate Contributions to Government's Thrift Savings Plan**

Add the ability for new hires from industry to convert existing 401K plans into the government Thrift Saving Plan and continue their contributions uninterrupted.

**Expand VERA/VSIP Authority**

Expand Voluntary Early Retirement Authority (VERA) and Voluntary Separation. Incentive Pay (VSIP) as workforce-shaping tools not associated with a reduction in force (RIF).

**Develop a Phased Retirement Program**

Develop a phased retirement program for key Acquisition Workforce personnel in order to transfer critical expertise to replacements.

**4. Conclusion**

This final section of Chapter III has shown there are many current recruitment and retention tools and pending initiatives designed to make the acquisition workforce manager's job easier. The two previous sections examined the demographic problem facing the acquisition workforce, and generational differences between Baby Boomers and Gen X. The next chapter of this thesis, will analyze these elements and attempt to answer the question of whether or not DoD's recruitment and retention strategy i.e. their toolbox, is a correct one considering what is important to the next generation of recruits.

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## IV. ANALYSIS

### A. ANALYSIS: ADEQUACY OF TOOLBOX

Based on the extensive list of tools and initiatives contained in Chapter III, it can be seen that there are a variety of ways policy makers believe they can address the recruitment and retention problem of the acquisition workforce. It does not seem, however, that all the tools and initiatives address the needs of the acquisition workforce. Many pursue other Government social objectives, are geared towards very short-term and/or critical personnel actions, are merely emphasizing the need to make better use of an existing tool, are performing a study, or are reflective of the Government's need to market itself better. Each of these tools designed to bring employees on-board may be valuable, but they are not relevant to this thesis's analytical focus. Accordingly, the toolbox is trimmed and consolidated to highlight those tools most likely to be important in the recruitment and retention of the acquisition workforce.

#### 1. Pruning

The following tools have been eliminated from analysis because they are designed to achieve Government social objectives:

- Special Hiring Authorities for People Who Have Recovered from Mental Illness.
- Special Appointments for Veterans.
- Bilingual/Bicultural Authority
- Special Hiring Authorities for People with Disabilities.

The following tools have been eliminated from analysis because they are short-term hiring solutions and offer no incentive to career type job recruitment and retention or they are so specific as not to apply to general recruitment and retention:

- Details
- Temporary Promotions
- Temporary Limited Appointments
- Term Appointments

- Consultant and Expert Temporary Employment
- Commercial Temporary Help
- Critical Hiring Needs Appointments
- Other Excepted Service (short-term appointments)
- Student Educational Employment Program
- Student Volunteer Service
- Dual-Compensation Waiver
- Initiative #26 – Convert Term to Permanent Appointments
- Initiative #31 – Return Home and Spouse Travel During Long-Term TDY

The following tools and initiatives have been eliminated from analysis because they merely indicate methods of DoD job advertising and/or marketing. The DoD clearly benefits from better marketing itself and this may ultimately have a significant impact on the size of the applicant pool, but it has little to do with whether a candidate gets offered the things he desires:

- Job Announcements/Area of Consideration
- Partnerships with colleges and Universities
- USAJOBS job bank
- Use of Commercial Recruiting Firms and Non-Profit Employment Services.
- Initiative #4 – Expand Recruiting Efforts
- Initiative #5 – Maximize Early Recruitment of College Students
- On-going Initiative – Automate the Hiring Process
- Initiative #10 – Promote DoD's Challenging Job Opportunities
- Initiative #11 – Develop Acquisition Workforce Recruiting Programs
- Initiative #13 – Establish Acquisition Workforce Web-site
- Initiative #14 – Develop a Recruitment and Retention Handbook

The following initiatives have been eliminated from analysis because they merely emphasize more use of an existing tool, are redundant with an existing tool, or are calling for some type of study to be performed (that of course may ultimately help policy makers make better management decisions in the future):

- Initiative #2 – Maximize Use of Existing Hiring Authorities
- Initiative #3 – Maximize Use of Existing Hiring Authorities to Make Pay More Competitive
- Initiative #6 – Provide Timely Certification Training
- Initiative #8 – Increase Use of Incentive Programs
- Initiative #9 – Ensure a Work-Friendly Environment
- Initiative #15 – Reengineer the Hiring Process
- Initiative #16 – Assess Job Location Competition
- Initiative #21 – Assess the Effect of FERS on the Workforce
- Initiative #22 – Assess High-Grade Requirements
- Initiative #23 – Improve Personnel Lapse Rates
- Initiative #24 – Conduct Entrance and Exit Surveys
- Initiative #25 – Establish Program to Share Best Practices Used Across the Acquisition Workforce
- On-going Initiative – Establish Career Development Plans for All Acquisition Career Fields
- Initiative #29 – Assess Personnel Management Authorities

The following initiatives have been eliminated because they are designed to enable managers to shape the existing workforce:

- Initiative #1 – Develop Needs-based Human Resource Performance plans for the Acquisition Workforce
- Initiative #30 – Allow Employees to Buy Down the Early Retirement Penalty
- On-going Initiative – Expand VERA/VSIP Authority
- On-going Initiative – Develop a Phased Retirement Program

## **2. Consolidating**

Of those tools and initiatives remaining there are logical groupings and consolidations that can be made to create a manageable toolbox for analysis.

The following tools have been grouped because they are primarily upwardly mobile programs that provide training and rotational job assignments designed to quickly produce skilled professional workers. The programs are competitive, limited in number, and typically utilize exceptional candidates just

entering the Government. They are consolidated under the name Upwardly Mobile Internships:

- Outstanding Scholar Program
- Federal Career Intern Program
- Presidential Management Intern Program
- Career Ladders
- Initiative #12 – Establish Scholarship (Summer Intern) Program

The following tools have been grouped because they provide lateral movement to existing employees interested in broadening their horizons. They are consolidated under the name Lateral Movement Opportunities:

- Intergovernmental Personnel Act Assignments
- Defense Leadership and Management Program
- Rotational Assignments
- Cross-Training
- Initiative #7 – More Career-Broadening Opportunities
- Initiative #19 – Multifunctional Career Paths/Certifications
- Initiative #20 – Increase Civilian Leadership Development
- Initiative #27 – DoD & Industry Exchange Program
- Initiative #28 – Encourage Job Mobility

The following tools have been grouped since they relate to education and training opportunities. This category is a very wide range of short-term, mid-term, and long-term training programs offering course completion certifications, career certifications, and both undergraduate and advanced degrees. Many of these are fully paid for by the Government to include employee salary while on training. They are consolidated under the tool name Education and Training:

- Tuition Assistance
- Student Loan Repayment
- Job-Related Training
- Reimburse Training and Education Costs
- Pay for Academic Degree
- Executive Leadership Development Program

As a result of the above pruning and consolidating the large list of recruitment and retention tools initially presented has been reduced to the more manageable number of twenty-one tools and initiatives contained in Table 4.1. Further reduction will produce diminishing returns since with each grouping there is a loss of some information. It is therefore determined that the following list accurately captures the recruitment and retention toolbox that DoD possesses to resolve its human capital challenge.

Table 4.1. List of Government Recruitment and Retention Tools and Initiatives.

<b>TOOLS</b>	<b>INITIATIVES</b>
Upwardly Mobile Internships	Private Sector Certifications
Lateral Movement Opportunities	Rehire Fed Retiree (no penalty)
Education and Training	Info Tech Special Pay Rates
Delegated Examining	Increase Bonus Ceiling (to 50%)
Placement Current/Former Employ	Convert 401K to TSP
Highest Previous Rate	
Travel & Transportation Expenses	
Recruitment Bonus (up to 25%)	
Superior Qualification Appointment	
Cash Awards	
Time-Off Awards	
Quality Step Increase	
Retention Allowances (up to 25%)	
Relocation Bonuses (up to 25%)	
Flexible Working Conditions	
Demonstration Project	

Chapter III contained qualitative data related to attitudes, values and beliefs of the GenX and Baby Boomer cohorts. Since the information came from a variety of authors and sources, there is some overlap and variance in opinion. Therefore, in an effort to make sense of this information for analytical purposes, this thesis has grouped, trimmed, and merged the data to create a table array

containing those things most important to GenX and Boomers. Table 4.2 contains this information.

Table 4.2. Important Factors to GenX and Boomers.

GENX	BOOMER
Flexibility	Sense of Accomplishment
Balanced Life (work vs free time)	Social Recognition
Self-control of destiny	Sense of Belonging
Education	Education
Flexible Schedule	Organizational Commitment
Opportunity	

Table 4.4 utilizes the toolbox information and makes an assessment of the appeal of each tool to both GenX and Boomers. The table makes either a high, medium or low qualitative assessment of relative importance to the generational categories. A “high” rating suggests that this tool will have a very high or definite impact on generational recruitment and/or retention. A “medium” rating proposes that the tool will have some influence on a decision to take or remain in a Government position. While a “low” rating indicates that the tool will have little to no effect on an individuals’ decision related to accepting or continuing in Government employment. A simple table helps make the rating scheme easy to understand:

Table 4.3. Toolbox Rating Scheme.

Rating	Meaning
High	Significant Impact
Medium	Some Impact
Low	Little to No Impact

Table 4.4 uses three different generation categories, they are: GenX Entry, GenX Lateral & Retention, and Boomer Lateral & Retention. GenX Entry

refers to a person that is entering the professional workplace for the first time. This could be an individual that has taken the traditional path of going from high school directly to university and upon graduation is taking their first professional position, and so, is expected to be in their early twenties. This category also contains individuals from a non-traditional path whom might have worked part-time, intermittently or full-time or any likely combination thereof at a non-professional job while eventually obtaining their degree. These individuals are expected to be less than forty years old. On the other hand, GenX Lateral & Retention refers to an individual born after 1960 currently working in a professional position either in the private sector (laterals) or in the public sector (retention). Finally, the Boomer Lateral & Retention category includes individuals born between 1944 and 1960 that are working in a professional position either currently with the Government (retention) or in the private sector (lateral). This category also captures people that might currently be retired (federal or non-federal retiree) yet be a candidate for re-entering the workforce in an acquisition workforce position. In some blocks a “N/A” is placed since, based on the definition of the generation category, it is determined the tool would not apply. For example, an entry level Gen-X would never have had a “highest previous rate” and therefore this tool is not applicable.

Utilizing the information contained in Table 4.4, this thesis shall analyze and assess which tools appear most promising in recruiting and retaining the civilian acquisition workforce.

Table 4.4. Toolbox Assessment of Importance.

TOOLS	GEN-X ENTRY	GEN-X LATERAL & RETENTION	BOOMER LATERAL & RETENTION
Upwardly Mobile Internships	High	Medium	Low
Lateral Movement Opportunities	High	High	Low
Education and Training	High	High	High
Delegated Examining	Low	Low	Low
Placement Current/Former Employ	N/A	Medium	Medium
Highest Previous Rate	N/A	Medium	Medium
Travel & Transportation Expenses	Medium	Medium	Medium
Recruitment Bonus (up to 25%)	Medium	Medium	High
Superior Qualification Appointment	Low	Medium	Medium
Cash Awards	Medium	Medium	High
Time-Off Awards	High	High	Low
Quality Step Increase	Medium	Medium	High
Retention Allowances (up to 25%)	N/A	Medium	High
Relocation Bonuses (up to 25%)	N/A	Medium	High
Flexible Working Conditions	High	High	Low
Demonstration Project	Medium	Medium	High
INITIATIVES			
Private Sector Certifications	N/A	Medium	High
Rehire Fed Retiree (no penalty)	N/A	N/A	High
Info Tech Special Pay Rates	Medium	Medium	Medium
Increase Bonus Ceiling (to 50%)	Medium	Medium	High
Convert 401K to TSP	N/A	High	High

Table 4.5. Tool #1.

<b>TOOL</b>	<b>GEN-X ENTRY</b>	<b>GEN-X LATERAL &amp; RETENTION</b>	<b>BOOMER LATERAL &amp; RETENTION</b>
Upwardly Mobile Internships	High	Medium	Low

Given that Gen-X places a premium on flexibility and is motivated by quick results and feedback, the internships offered by the DoD provide an excellent tool for recruiting Gen-X at the entry level because they provide formal training, rotational on-the-job training, and steady advancement through the ranks to journeyman level. Young Gen-Xers can track their progression, experience a wide variety of assignments, are provided continual assessment and are given a goal of graduation. It is expected, however, that the appeal of these internships will diminish with older Gen-Xers, and even more so with Boomers, that already have solid credentials, significant work experience, and marketable skills. The more qualified the employee the less likely they will be drawn to a program that is obviously tailored to neophytes. The drawback of internships is that their numbers are typically very limited, and only a few select individuals with exceptional qualifications are chosen to fill the slots. As the programs are currently structured they offer only a narrow feed tube into the acquisition workforce.

Table 4.6. Tool #2.

<b>TOOL</b>	<b>GEN-X ENTRY</b>	<b>GEN-X LATERAL &amp; RETENTION</b>	<b>BOOMER LATERAL &amp; RETENTION</b>
Lateral Movement Opportunities	High	High	Low

There are ample opportunities for employees to move from job to job in the DoD. This is most likely to be appealing to Gen-X since they are opportunist by nature and typically hold jobs for a short period of time. Boomers, on the other hand, are more loyal to organizations and they are less likely to job hop since they expect that they will eventually be rewarded for their dedication. The

problem is that the DoD doesn't necessarily promote movement within the structure as an opportunity, and many Boomers hold a negative view of resumes that show a history of job movement. What the DoD needs to realize is that one organization's loss is another organization's gain, and that with each employee turn over the Government as a whole is adding depth and experience to its workforce. Boomers need to take the macro view, appreciate this Gen-X value, and understand that what goes around eventually comes around.

Table 4.7. Tool #3.

TOOL	GEN-X ENTRY	GEN-X LATERAL & RETENTION	BOOMER LATERAL & RETENTION
Education and Training	High	High	High

The education and training opportunities that exist for the civilian acquisition workforce are outstanding. There are short courses (1 – 4 weeks), medium courses (1 – 6 months), and long-term training (1 – 2 years) leading to course certificates, degrees, and levels of certification in many fields. This represents a very promising tool to both recruit and retain all age groups since both Gen-X and Boomers place great importance on the value of continual education.

The reasons that this tool may work for each group may be different, however. Boomers place great importance on the chance to learn new things and the learning experience holds intrinsic value. They will most likely interpret the educational experience as an investment their organization has made in them as valued employees. The result will be greater dedication to the organization. Xers, on the other hand, highly value education and training, but for them it represents the key to their future opportunities either with the sponsoring organization or elsewhere. Therefore, it is likely that Xers view educational opportunities in terms of what it can do for them, and they may join or stay with an organization accordingly.

The main problem regarding the education and training opportunities is the lack of awareness within the acquisition workforce and the corresponding low number of applications for competitive programs. The DoD needs to create a culture of awareness regarding the potential for training and education and encourage employees to apply for programs and if accepted, enable them to fully participate in the training.

Table 4.8. Tool #4.

TOOL	GEN-X ENTRY	GEN-X LATERAL & RETENTION	BOOMER LATERAL & RETENTION
Delegated Examining	Low	Low	Low

The traditional examination method of entering the Government, whether done by the OPM or delegated to the DoD, does not align with any Gen-X or Boomer value. It is typically slow and reflective of cumbersome bureaucracy and will turn off potential applicants, especially those whom are only mildly interested in working in the acquisition workforce. There is, however, some value in a standardized examination process in that it creates an objective data point for hiring decisions. If the DoD continues to use examinations as criteria in hiring, it needs to weave it seamlessly into the recruitment process, provide instant feedback, and make it as short and painless as possible.

Table 4.9. Tool #5.

TOOL	GEN-X ENTRY	GEN-X LATERAL & RETENTION	BOOMER LATERAL & RETENTION
Placement Current/Former Employ	N/A	Medium	Medium

Since this tool applies to current or former Government employees it is not applicable to entry level hiring. This tool represents the traditional manner in which employees move up and around the acquisition workforce and is based on time-in-grade and merit principles. The main advantage of this tool lies in lateral

recruitment since it enables former employees to re-enter the workforce, and enables lateral movement within the workforce for current members. The drawback to the existing system is a lack of centralization, consistency and the cumbersome attachments that often accompany job announcements. The Army, Navy, Air Force and Marines each have their own hiring processes and sources of job announcements. For example, for GS-12s and above the Army has an automated system to provide job announcements to only existing acquisition workforce members. The current structure does not promote cross-fertilization and discourages lateral movement. Additionally, the customary practice of requiring written responses to knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) is seen as an additional hurdle to job applications that many employees are reluctant to endure. It seems information reflective of KSAs could just as easily be gleaned from the personal interview process versus placing that burden on all potentially interested applicants. Within each department, however, the traditional method of placement of current and former employees is the primary method of movement and is effective in that regard.

Table 4.10. Tool #6.

<b>TOOL</b>	<b>GEN-X ENTRY</b>	<b>GEN-X LATERAL &amp; RETENTION</b>	<b>BOOMER LATERAL &amp; RETENTION</b>
Highest Previous Rate	N/A	Medium	Medium

Since this tool applies to former Government employees it is not applicable to entry level hiring. Enabling re-hire at an employee's previously held highest rate is an effective tool for bringing back former employees because it doesn't require them to re-climb the pay scale ladder. The drawback to this provision, however, may prevent DoD from re-acquiring those employees it most wants and/or needs. For example, an employee may be contemplating re-entering the acquisition workforce after he has obtained an advanced degree or acquired other significant work experience elsewhere. He may now be much more marketable and in command of a higher salary. Unfortunately, in these

situations, his highest previous rate may not be reflective of his market value and, as such, will provide minimal incentive to re-entering the acquisition workforce. On the other hand, if the prospective employee in question values more highly quality-of-life and other qualitative aspects of Government work that he realizes are difficult to obtain in private sector employment - than knowing he can re-gain his previous highest rate (regularly adjusted for inflation) may be a trade-off acceptable in his decision calculus.

Table 4.11. Tool #7.

<b>TOOL</b>	<b>GEN-X ENTRY</b>	<b>GEN-X LATERAL &amp; RETENTION</b>	<b>BOOMER LATERAL &amp; RETENTION</b>
Travel & Transportation Expenses	Medium	Medium	Medium

Authorizing the costs of travel for interviews and transportation expenses associated with initial and subsequent Permanent Change of Station (PCS) moves is a necessary and value-added tool in recruitment and retention. The DoD, however, should not expect the floodgates to open and anticipate a significant improvement in their hiring and retention efforts since these types of expenses have come to be normal costs of doing business in most industries. On the contrary, if the DoD did not absorb these costs most likely its applicant pool would be significantly decreased and include only those individuals desperately in need of employment or truly keen to obtain an acquisition workforce position and see the personal expense as a worthy trade-off in their big picture analysis. The DoD should standardize this approach in all professional hiring and plan for the costs in their budget.

Table 4.12. Tool #8.

<b>TOOL</b>	<b>GEN-X ENTRY</b>	<b>GEN-X LATERAL &amp; RETENTION</b>	<b>BOOMER LATERAL &amp; RETENTION</b>
Recruitment Bonus (up to 25%)	Medium	Medium	High

Enabling job offers to be sweetened by adding recruitment bonuses of up to 25% should prove an effective tool for signing those candidates on the margin of accepting an offer to join the acquisition workforce. Most likely, it will prove more effective for Boomers than Gen-Xers since Boomers will see this as instant recognition of their worth which is important to them. The real problem here is the recruitment bonuses are typically a one-time deal and even a 25% bonus does not make up for much of the salary disparity that exists between private and public employment. If starting salary is a critical decision variable than it is unlikely that this bonus will mean much to those prospective Gen-X employees that are high in demand. On the other hand, if the Gen-X candidate finds the other qualitative aspects of acquisition workforce appealing, adding a reasonable recruitment bonus to the offer may indeed provide the extra incentive necessary to induce him to join the ranks.

Table 4.13. Tool #9.

TOOL	GEN-X ENTRY	GEN-X LATERAL & RETENTION	BOOMER LATERAL & RETENTION
Superior Qualification Appointment	Low	Low	Medium

It is unlikely this tool will stir any great interest in Gen-X or Boomer hiring efforts since it is rarely used and only increases pay within the announced hiring pay grade versus allowing jumps in pay grades. It could however, like recruitment bonuses, provide sufficient incentive to those prospective employees on the margin. Most likely, though, if a candidate's qualifications are far superior to all other applicants than he will be able to negotiate an overall better package in the private sector where there are less rules, restrictions, and where feedback is more instantaneous. Quick deals are appealing to Gen-X. Boomers may be more enticed by this tool since they might interpret an exception to the norm as reflective of their sense of accomplishment and worth.

Table 4.14. Tool #10.

<b>TOOL</b>	<b>GEN-X ENTRY</b>	<b>GEN-X LATERAL &amp; RETENTION</b>	<b>BOOMER LATERAL &amp; RETENTION</b>
Cash Awards	Medium	Medium	High

Motivated employees work hard and do their best because they expect to be rewarded accordingly, so cash awards can be effective in retention across all generational groups. Boomers though are more likely to respond to cash awards than Gen-Xers since Boomers value social recognition and money can provide material goods that are easily visible. The problem with the Government's cash award system is that it is cumbersome and time consuming often taking considerable justification on the part of the manager in addition to a process of multiple approval levels; and this for an amount considered very small by private sector standards. Additionally, cash awards have limited effect since they are often given sparingly and/or discreetly with no formal recognition. This is because managers are either reluctant to expend the effort or don't want other employees to know that somebody is being rewarded. Not being socially recognized de-motivates Boomers. A further problem is that often the rewards are given only to those employees who put in extra work in terms of overtime and weekend work. This is contradictory to the 40 hr per week model of Government employment and runs contrary to many quality-of-life aspects that might attract Gen-X recruits. Rewards should be given for creativity, excellence, efficiency, and delivering customer satisfaction. Rewarding long hours creates a culture that takes away from the work – private time balance that is so extremely important to Gen-X.

Table 4.15. Tool #11.

<b>TOOL</b>	<b>GEN-X ENTRY</b>	<b>GEN-X LATERAL &amp; RETENTION</b>	<b>BOOMER LATERAL &amp; RETENTION</b>
Time-Off Awards	High	High	Low

Free time is very highly valued by Gen-X more so than any other commodity. Therefore, any chance to get time-off work will act as a motivator. It is doubtful Boomers will be nearly as enticed since they are much more workaholic by nature, and free time provides minimal social recognition. The same criticism applies to the mechanism or granting time-off awards as it did to cash-awards since the process is the same. The only difference is the nominator selects a different block. An additional benefit of time-off awards is that they do not count against budgets, yet on-the-other-hand, managers are reluctant to grant them because they are seen as a bill yet to be paid in terms of employee absence or end of the year “use or lose” leave. The DoD needs to create a vehicle that enables immediate recognition, without cumbersome justification or approval that provides reward options appealing to all generational groups.

Table 4.16. Tool #12.

<b>TOOL</b>	<b>GEN-X ENTRY</b>	<b>GEN-X LATERAL &amp; RETENTION</b>	<b>BOOMER LATERAL &amp; RETENTION</b>
Quality Step Increases	Medium	Medium	High

Quality Step Increases (QSI) are apt to be more appealing to Boomers than Gen-Xers for the same reasons already cited for Cash Awards - namely that they will provide Boomers with increased income to procure goods and services that equates to their ability to be more recognized as “successful” in society. Although Gen-Xers like money, for them money is a means to sustain a quality of life. It is not an end in itself, and since QSIs are few and far between, GenX is unlikely to place great value on this type of reward. Unfortunately, like other federal rewards, the justification and approval process for QSIs is often a significant barrier. If the DoD wants continual excellence from their employees than it needs to create a reward system that provides continual incentive. As it now stands, the federal pay schedule typically increases pay within a grade by giving time-in-grade step increases on a one, two, and three year basis depending on where an employee fits in the pay grade. For example, GS-12

step 7 could wait three years before he advances in pay to a step 8. The difference is only a few thousand dollars more in pay. The current structure simply does not provide the necessary incentive to motivate employees beyond satisfactory performance.

Table 4.17. Tool #13.

<b>TOOL</b>	<b>GEN-X ENTRY</b>	<b>GEN-X LATERAL &amp; RETENTION</b>	<b>BOOMER LATERAL &amp; RETENTION</b>
Retention Allowances (up to 25%)	N/A	Medium	High

Retention Allowances are likely to be a good tool for retaining both Gen-Xers and Boomers but more so for Boomers. This is because Gen-Xers are opportunist by nature and less loyal to organizations than Boomers. Therefore, if there is another option that provides an equivalent incentive and/or the DoD has been delinquent in providing the flexibility, opportunity, and balanced life that the Xer had originally anticipated, than it is unlikely that a retention allowance will persuade him to stay. Boomers are more likely to interpret a retention allowance as reflective of how highly valued they are by the organization. Another factor that diminishes this tool for Xers is that the cumbersome justification and approval process must be reviewed and re-approved at least every 12 months. So, Xers are likely to see the retention allowance as merely a short-term fix designed to benefit the organization. The allowance could be revoked when the organization has adjusted, giving support for Xer distaste for and lack of loyalty to large institutions.

Table 4.18. Tool #14.

<b>TOOL</b>	<b>GEN-X ENTRY</b>	<b>GEN-X LATERAL &amp; RETENTION</b>	<b>BOOMER LATERAL &amp; RETENTION</b>
Relocation Bonus	N/A	Medium	High

Relocation bonuses are likely to be very appealing to those Boomers that are open to re-locating. Xers may also like them since it provides money on top of what they already may want – lateral movement. The downside of this tool is that it is used for only hard-to-fill positions in a different commuting area. Therefore, it is not a common tool that can be used to entice an employee to accept another job. For example, a manager may want a specific employee that is exceptionally qualified yet there maybe other applicants that could do the job. In this instance it is doubtful the manager could use this as an extra incentive to attract the employee. It is most likely an effective tool in remote and/or undesirable locations where typically the qualified applicant pool is minimal. The DoD should consider making this a standard tool that can be employed at manager discretion when competing for the best employees. Possibly each command could be given a quota of this type of bonus to use at its discretion.

Table 4.19. Tool #15.

<b>TOOL</b>	<b>GEN-X ENTRY</b>	<b>GEN-X LATERAL &amp; RETENTION</b>	<b>BOOMER LATERAL &amp; RETENTION</b>
Flexible Working Conditions	High	High	Low

Flexible working conditions (flex-time, variable work schedules, telecommuting etc.) may be one of the most critical tools necessary to recruit and retain Gen-X. Conversely, flexible working conditions are not highly valued by Boomers. As noted in Chapter III, Xers and Boomers do not share the same attitude related to having freedom from supervision, and it is anticipated that this will correlate with their attitude towards flexible working conditions. Flexible working conditions mean employees have to be given freedom and entrusted to do their work. Yet, as evidenced by the survey of public sector “wants and gets”, under the current environment, public employees rank that they get freedom from supervision tenth of fifteen criteria. Xers “demand” flextime, however, establishing and maintaining a flexible environment may not be as easy as it seems.

For one thing, if the acquisition workforce is given the type of flexibility desired by Gen-X, it forces evaluation of performance to be primarily on end results (quality, quantity, on-time). This will work only if there is a corresponding change in work measurement and personnel policy. In the private sector, under-performers are readily identified and easily let go. In public work it is much more difficult both because of the nature of Government work and the bureaucracy of the personnel system. For example, private companies are profit oriented and, in the case of sales or marketing for instance, results are easily measured and employees not meeting quotes are identified and let go. The Government does not operate based on profit and acquisition work is difficult to quantify and measure. As such, flexible working conditions may create a situation where public employees enjoy the benefits of less accountability and an inability to measure results knowing, at the same time, that personnel policies make it difficult to fire them.

Another deeply rooted factor regarding the perceived generational split on flextime lies in the industrial development of America. The industrial age brought an era of institutionalism that prepared people to work in factories. Schools and other public settings socialized people in an environment of repetition and strict structure in preparation for factory work – even the school buildings resembled factories in appearance and layout. During this time Boomers were being socialized and the Government and its bureaucracy was also growing. The information age, on the other hand, put power into the hands of Gen-X, and many businesses have become service oriented. The external environment has changed quickly and the Government and its Boomer managers have not kept up. Boomers tend to cling to old ways as a method of work control but Xers will not remain in such an environment.

Another complicating element of the acquisition workforce is the military and civilian culture clash. The military by necessity is structure oriented and since DoD is the stage, military personnel hold many management positions within the acquisition workforce. Military managers may find it hard to relinquish

the control they are accustomed to possessing and Gen-X is unlikely to respond to military structure and discipline.

In order to make flexible working conditions a viable option there needs to be a corresponding change in the way the DoD does business in terms of work performance evaluation and personnel policies. At the same time, there needs to be a culture transformation that brings Boomer, military, and Gen-X attitudes towards the work environment onto the same sheet of music.

Table 4.20. Tool #16.

TOOL	GEN-X ENTRY	GEN-X LATERAL & RETENTION	BOOMER LATERAL & RETENTION
Demonstration Project	Medium	Medium	High

The Demonstration Project (demo project) is a definite step in the right direction and is likely to be effective in recruitment and retention across all generational groups. Boomers, in particular, are likely to respond to the demo project since it is more likely to provide them with the type of recognition and sense of accomplishment they value.

In terms of recruitment and retention, the benefits of the demo project are primarily that it allows higher starting salaries, higher salary ceilings without promotion, and yearly opportunities for pay increases based on performance. It does this by grouping/banding traditional GS pay grades together. For example, one pay band might include GS-7, 9, and 11, or GS-12 and 13 etc.. Therefore, an employee can start as a GS-12 step 1 and move up to a GS-13 step 10 without a formal promotion. The employee can do this much faster than under the traditional pay schedule since he is evaluated yearly and can receive appropriate pay increases based on his performance. Also, an employee can be offered a starting salary anywhere within the pay band (depending on the rules of the particular demo project). This provides good incentive to employees.

The drawbacks to the demo project are subtle. For one thing, the demo project is only offered at select locations to enable the DoD to assess it before further implementation. This does not create consistency for employees across the acquisition workforce. Another complicating aspect regards the variance in demo projects. For example, the Army and the Navy have very different programs and corresponding approaches to implementation. This makes the programs more confusing for employees and possibly dissuades transfers. Additionally, in most cases the performance pay pool is limited and its size can be impacted by the grade structure of the location. For example, if the pay pool is a percentage of employee salary and the location is, for instance, an R&D center with higher grades than a normal installation, then the amount of pay in the pool and the pay employees ultimately receive will be higher at the R&D center. One other obvious consideration is abuse of the system. Since performance evaluations are often very subjective and employee results are difficult to quantify, it makes it easy to give larger salary increases to favorite employees.

Table 4.21. Initiative #1.

<b>INITIATIVE</b>	<b>GEN-X ENTRY</b>	<b>GEN-X LATERAL &amp; RETENTION</b>	<b>BOOMER LATERAL &amp; RETENTION</b>
Private Sector Certifications	N/A	Medium	High

Certifications for private sector experience are likely to be an effective tool for bringing private sector employees into the acquisition workforce since they provide recognition for education, training, and other certification obtained outside the Government. Boomers, in particular, will most likely respond to this tool because for them gaining new DoD certifications for education and experience already obtained validates their sense of accomplishment.

There may be some difficulty in aligning private sector credentials to DoD certifications since the job categories and duties of many private companies, particularly smaller ones, may not readily align with DoD standards. The DoD

may end up retraining private sector employees and still sending them to all the requisite classes even though a pre-employment screening process might designate an individual eligible for a given level of certification.

Table 4.22. Initiative #2.

<b>INITIATIVE</b>	<b>GEN-X ENTRY</b>	<b>GEN-X LATERAL &amp; RETENTION</b>	<b>BOOMER LATERAL &amp; RETENTION</b>
Rehire Fed Retiree (no penalty)	N/A	N/A	High

Since it is doubtful that any Gen-Xers are eligible to retire, this tool is applicable to only the Boomer group. For those Boomers still interested in working, the opportunity to re-enter federal service at full pay without any decrement to their retirement pay is likely to be a very effective tool for getting them off the golf course. This solution, although viable, potentially poses several problems. For instance, it may fill the ranks with individuals lacking in needed information technology skills, especially if the rehire has been in a retired status for any significant length of time. Additionally, the rehires may only represent a temporary solution since odds are they would only work for a limited number of years in any event. Also, enabling such a practice may backfire on the DoD since current employees at or near retirement age may retire at the earliest convenience and quickly return in a dual compensation status. This could have a budget effect that the DoD has not anticipated.

Table 4.23. Initiative #3.

<b>INITIATIVE</b>	<b>GEN-X ENTRY</b>	<b>GEN-X LATERAL &amp; RETENTION</b>	<b>BOOMER LATERAL &amp; RETENTION</b>
Info Tech Special Pay Rates	Medium	Medium	Medium

This initiative is likely to produce larger pools of applicants across all generational categories and be effective in filling the ranks of information technology billets. The DoD, however, should still not expect to attract the most

skilled and/or qualified individuals that are in high demand in this field. Establishing special pay rates will at best only make the compensation package for this field a bit more competitive with private industry. The DoD simply does not have the perks (stock options, company cars, expense accounts) that it can offer individuals that are high in demand. On the other hand, if the DoD is able to firmly establish and create a culture that embraces flexible working conditions, than a candidate that places a high value on working only 40 hours per week, requires only a modest salary, and places great value on life balance may be motivated to join and stay with the Government.

Table 4.24. Initiative #4.

<b>INITIATIVE</b>	<b>GEN-X ENTRY</b>	<b>GEN-X LATERAL &amp; RETENTION</b>	<b>BOOMER LATERAL &amp; RETENTION</b>
Increase Bonus Ceiling (to 50%)	Medium	Medium	High

Any increase in bonus ceiling is only going to be correspondingly effective at recruiting and retaining those individuals at the appropriate margin. Basic economic theory supports marginal decisions and opportunity cost as fundamental to decision making. The key for the DoD is to know how many personnel it needs in each category and use varying levels of incentives to increase marginal recruitment in each labor category, until the entire workforce is appropriately staffed. The problem with this type of approach is that most likely there will be cries of foul from fields afar of unfair and unequal Government employment practices since there would be pay disparity both between and within job series. Any time bonuses are increased there will be some corresponding effect on recruitment and retention. It doesn't really matter, however, whether the DoD increases its bonus capability 50%, 100% or 200%, the fundamental economic principal remains valid in that people will decide to join or stay based on their opportunity costs.

Table 4.25. Initiative #5.

<b>INITIATIVE</b>	<b>GEN-X ENTRY</b>	<b>GEN-X LATERAL &amp; RETENTION</b>	<b>BOOMER LATERAL &amp; RETENTION</b>
Convert 401K to TSP	N/A	High	High

This initiative is likely to be an effective element in strengthening the Government's recruitment strategy from private sector sources. In making a decision to enter the Government, individuals will most likely give serious consideration to how that decision effects their current retirement plans – the older they are the more important this becomes. If taking a position in the acquisition workforce detracts from the timetable and benefits they anticipate under their current employment plan, then it is unlikely many candidates will jump ship to the Government.

### **3. Conclusion**

Based on the above analysis it can be seen that the current recruitment and retention toolbox will have varying levels of success as it applies to the different categories of Gen-X and Boomers. The obvious and quick answer to the DoD's demographic problem is that it needs to quickly staff up. The problem is that, even though the DoD has many tools that could be effective in solving their human resources dilemma, the environment predominantly established by the Boomer culture needs to be adjusted and made more flexible. This would create a workplace where Xer energy is invigorated, and where they have a sense of freedom to do the job while maximizing all available opportunities within the DoD acquisition workforce. Within limits, the DoD's current mix of tools can attract and retain a reasonably qualified mix of Gen-X and Boomers across all functional labor categories, provided the DoD gives serious consideration to the corresponding recommendations offered by this thesis in Chapter V5.

The remaining analysis of this thesis looks at two final areas. The first includes a brief examination of why the Xer and Boomer generational differences exist and offers an independent view that differs from the Standard and

Revisionist Views contained in Chapter III3. The last bit of analysis suggests reasons why the DoD got into the demographic crisis in the first place.

## **B. ANALYSIS: GENERATIONAL DIFFERENCES**

Regarding the Baby Boomer and Gen X generation gap, currently there is no way to say whether the Standard View or Revisionist View is correct. Only time will tell if Boomers and Xers are vastly and irreconcilably different or if, as the Revisionist View suggests, they are really not that different and that as time passes the generations will converge and share the same attitudes, motivations, and values.

There may, however, be a third view - the Rejoinder View. That is, that Boomers and Xers are in fact different and that they will always hold different views on what is important. This does not mean that bridges cannot be built.

Xers are the product of their environment and have been socialized for good or bad by Baby Boomer behavior. As Xers age they will not forget the lessons Boomers taught them during their formative years. Xers are returning to social values akin to those of the Veteran generation. Xers understand the importance of family, social order, morality, and helping the less fortunate. They believe in earning a living, but see work as a means to sustain a lifestyle (not work as a lifestyle). Maturing Xers will not be fooled by corporate or political rah-rah; instead they will trust in themselves and others close to them. Their priority will be on leading a well-balanced life. For these reasons, as Xers age, they will be different, and perhaps better, than Boomers.

## **C. ANALYSIS: REASONS FOR THE RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION PROBLEM**

It seems that despite the best of intentions and brightest of people, the Government is ever responding to new catastrophes. Granted, certain dilemmas are more understandable since nobody seems able to predict them (for example, the recent economic downturn). However, the current demographic problem should have been foreseeable since the workforce is quantifiable, and therefore able to be monitored – yet now the DoD scrambles.

It seems the fundamental reason for the DoD's current crisis is that it didn't have an acquisition workforce strategy (including a workforce model). It did not have a handle on how many of each labor category and corresponding grade structures it needed to run its many programs. As a result, continual short-term decisions were made without considering the ultimate result. If there had been long-term planning, the DoD might now have an adequate and tailored workforce well suited to respond to program needs.

## **V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **A. INTRODUCTION**

This thesis has examined key factors impacting the DoD's ability to successfully recruit and retain its civilian acquisition workforce. This topic is particularly relevant right now since the DoD is in the midst of a human capital challenge that some predict will reach serious proportions. This predicament is demographic, in that the DoD did not hire and groom acquisition workforce personnel for much of the 1990's. Now a large percentage of the existing workforce is approaching retirement age and the projected mass exodus could leave the workforce decimated.

The easy answer is to hire the people that the DoD needs and mold the workforce as appropriate to the overarching acquisition mission. Yet, this may not be as simple as it seems, since the current generation of policy makers making related recruitment and retention decisions have not seriously focused on recruiting and retention for nearly fifteen years. As a result, they are pursuing new hires from a different generational cohort whose attitudes and values differ. Therefore, what worked for the Baby Boomers may not necessarily work for Generation X.

Accordingly, this thesis examined key social factors between the generational groups and then balanced them against the current mix of recruitment and retention tools the DoD is utilizing to address its human capital needs. The approach was qualitative in nature and designed to determine whether or not the DoD's strategy was on target.

### **B. SUMMARY**

This thesis addressed several questions and summarized responses are provided below:

#### **1. Primary Research Question**

- What are the key social factors that might impact the DoD's ability to successfully recruit and retain the next generation acquisition workforce?**

Answer: The key social factors that might impact the DoD's ability to recruit and retain Generation-X lie in its ability to understand and adjust to the generational differences between Boomers and Xers. This means that the leaders of the acquisition workforce must change the work culture to include and embrace mechanisms that reflect what is important to Generation-X.

## **2. Subsidiary Research Questions**

- **What is the problem the DoD is facing regarding maintaining its future acquisition workforce and why is it having it?**

Answer: The DoD failed to properly plan the manpower required to sustain the acquisition workforce. It pursued downsizing without any workforce model as its objective. It now faces a situation where 50% of the current acquisition workforce will be retirement eligible over the next few years. The DoD must now increase recruitment and retention in a highly competitive market for Generation-X employees.

- **What are the attitudes, values, and beliefs of the next generation of recruits?**

Answer: Generation-X values flexibility, life balance, self control, and personal growth. They trust in themselves and will not fall into the same institutional traps as their parents. The DoD must create a flexible work environment that enables Xers to take advantage of opportunity and empowers the individual.

- **What tools are currently available to aid in recruitment and retention?**

Answer: This thesis has listed and analyzed the many tools and initiatives available to DoD managers to aid in their recruitment and retention goals. The tools as currently used may not be adequate in the long haul. Instead the DoD should consider the recommendations contained below to add more depth and power to these tools and initiatives.

- **Which of these tools appear most promising?**

Answer: The tools as they now exist offer varying degrees of promise. The most promising are the flex-time provisions, lateral movement and internship opportunities, education, and Demo Projects. These bode well since they are

designed to make the work environment more flexible and enable employees to take advantage of opportunities wherever they exist.

### C. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the information and analysis contained in this thesis the following conclusions are made:

- The current mix of tools and initiatives designed to recruit and retain the civilian acquisition workforce is extensive; yet as they are currently implemented they will achieve sub-optimal results. They do not go far enough to accommodate values held dear by Generation-X.
- Boomers and Xers are different in many aspects, but not so different that bridges cannot be built. It is likely that as Xers age their values will converge with and align more closely with Boomer and Veteran values. The likely exceptions are that Xers will continue to want more flexibility, self-control, freedom, and balance in their life.
- There are varying degrees of disparity in how Xers and Boomers view the individual tools available for recruitment and retention. Boomers and Xers differ most greatly on the relative importance placed on internships, lateral movement opportunities, time off work provisions, and flexible working conditions.
- The DoD needs to expand upon many of the existing tools (as outlined in the recommendations section to follow) and create a work culture that offers those things most important to each generation.
- Despite the predictions of gloom, the DoD can probably muddle through the current dilemma. The threat drives the budget and with the recent increases to DoD funding, adequate resources will most likely be allocated to address the acquisition workforce deficiencies. If the DoD however does not create a workforce model and manage recruitment and retention towards it, than most likely the DoD will face another workforce crisis at some time in the future.

### D. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the analysis contained herein, the following list of suggestions is recommended to increase the DoD's ability to compete for the labor it needs to perform acquisition functions:

- Expand internships to include all entry-level professional positions.
- Advertise and promote career broadening and lateral movement opportunity within the DoD. Create an environment that embraces

transition and does not frown upon job-hopping within the structure. This will require training at all levels.

- Send out DoD wide messages to all e-mail addresses that announce training opportunities. Hold semi-annual road shows at major installations that promote education and training programs. Include literature on such programs in recruitment materials.
- Delegate entrance exam authority to the local human resources organizational level. The exams should be short standardized tests not exceeding 45 minutes in length and provide instant score results. There would be a pre-determined cut-off score enabling an immediate “go/no-go” decision related to further processing of the application.
- Centralize all DoD and Federal acquisition workforce job announcements into a single web-site. Make all announcements open to all applicants. Create a single resume form, not to exceed 3 pages, for submission and initial evaluation. Do away with all requirements for addressing KSAs (knowledge, skills, and abilities).
- Enable re-hire at higher than previous rate when evidence exists that applicant has attained education, skills, or work experience that makes him more of a valuable asset.
- Create a culture that readily accepts interview fly-backs and PCS expenses as a cost of business. Require organizations to plan for these costs in their budgets. The DoD should both attend and hold job fairs to conduct initial screening and first interviews – immediately flying back the most promising candidates for further interviews as necessary.
- Make it a standard practice to allow immediate offers of employment anywhere within a pay grade (step 1 to 10) and allow immediate offer of the recruitment bonus on top of it. There should be no justification and approval process, but rather allow the manager to decide based on the current state of competition in his location and relative candidate qualifications. The bonus amount should be tied to a minimal corresponding time period agreed to in writing.
- Create a “cafeteria style” award system that allows the employee to choose what he wants<sup>37</sup>. Manager approves level and employee selects award. A rough model clarifies this recommendation:

Level of Award	Time-Off	Monetary
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<sup>37</sup> Jurkiewicz Carole, Massey Tom, Brown Roger, Motivation in Public and Private Organizations – A Comparative Study, Public Productivity & Management Review, March 1998.

3	5 days	\$2500
2	3 days	\$1500
1	1 day	\$500

- Increase and standardize the use of Quality Step Increases (QSIs) for those employees not in a Demo Project. Provide yearly incentive plan to motivate employees.
- Authorize each organization direct relocation bonus payment authority. Establish yearly quota system for each command versus basing the bonus on “hard to fill” positions.
- Flex-time – Institute mandatory flex-time at all DoD activities. In order for this to work the DoD should tie performance evaluations to objective criteria. Tie personnel policies to performance results in order to enable swift reward and discipline as appropriate. Provide training to Boomer and military personnel on flex-time principles.
- Demo Project – Create a uniform system across all acquisition organizations. Make pay for performance salary increases based on objective criteria. Create a seamless system for ease of employee mobility.
- Create a system of industry and Government standard certifications that has dual recognition and more easily accommodates seamless transfer between industry and Government. Only the DoD recognizes DAWIA certifications.
- Create law that enables seamless transfer of 401k to TSP and back, and between all major retirement plans.
- Establish an acquisition workforce model including labor categories, staffing levels, and grade structures (much like the military manpower model) and manage the workforce towards it.

## E. AREAS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This thesis was qualitative in nature and examined social factors that might impact recruitment and retention of the acquisition workforce. In order to ascertain more definitively the effectiveness of DoD’s recruitment and retention strategy, future research designed to quantify the relative merit of the recruitment and retention toolbox in terms of Generation-X and Baby Boomers would add considerable value to the research contained in this thesis. The following tools

would most likely provide benefit to the DoD's recruitment and retention strategy if their impact were quantified:

- Upwardly Mobile Internships
- Lateral Movement Opportunities
- Cafeteria Style Awards Recommendation
- Flexible Working Conditions
- Private Sector Certifications

## **APPENDIX. LIST OF MDAPS BY MILITARY SERVICE**

### **ARMY DAB (ACAT I D) LIST**

ATACMS-BAT - Army Tactical Missile System-Brilliant Anti-Armor Submunition

COMANCHE – Reconnaissance Attack Helicopter

CRUSADER – Advanced Field Artillery System/Future Armored Resupply Vehicle

FBCB2 – Force XXI Battle Command Brigade and Below Program

IAV – Interim Armored Vehicle

MCS (ATCCS) - Maneuver Control System (Army Tactical Command and Control System)

### **ARMY COMPONENT (ACAT I C) LIST**

ABRAMS UPGRADE - Abrams Tank Upgrade

ATIRCM/CMWS - Advance Threat Infrared Countermeasures/Common Missile Warning System

BRADLEY UPGRADE - Bradley Fighting Vehicle System Upgrade

CGS - Common Ground Station. (formerly JSTARS CGS)

CHEM DEMIL – Chemical Demilitarization Program, consisting of both the stockpile and non-stockpile programs

CH-47F – Cargo Helicopter. CH-47D helicopter upgrade program

FMTV - Family of Medium Tactical Vehicles.

JAVELIN – Advanced Anti-Tank Weapon System – Medium

LONGBOW APACHE - Radar-Based Target Acquisition and Fire Control System

LONGBOW HELLFIRE - HELLFIRE Missile System compatible with the LONGBOW Fire Control Radar

MLRS UPGRADE - Multiple Launch Rocket System Upgrade

SADARM - Sense and Destroy Armor

SMART-T - Secure Mobile Anti-Jam Reliable Tactical - Terminal

**NAVY DAB (ACAT I D) LIST**

AAAV - Advanced Amphibious Assault Vehicle

ALAM – Advanced Land Attack Missile

CEC – Cooperative Engagement Capability

CVN(X) - Next Generation Nuclear Aircraft Carrier

DD 21 – 21st Century Destroyer Program

JSOW/UNITARY - Joint Stand-Off Weapon with Unitary Warhead variant

LPD 17 - Amphibious Assault Ship

MIDS-LVT - Multi-Functional Information Distribution System-Low Volume Terminal

SSN 774 - VIRGINIA CLASS Submarine

USMC H-1 Upgrades (4BW/4BN) - United States Marine Corps Mid-life Upgrade to AH-1W Attack Helicopter and UH-1N Utility Helicopter

**NAVY COMPONENT (ACAT I C) LIST**

AIM-9X - Air-to-Air Missile Upgrade

AV-8B REMANUFACTURE - Short Takeoff and Landing (V/STOL) Close Air Support Aircraft

CH-60S – Utility helicopter to replace existing CH-46D, HH-60H, SH-3, & UH-1N helicopters

CVN 68 - NIMITZ Class Nuclear Powered Aircraft Carriers

DDG 51 - Guided Missile Destroyer (basic ship and all variants)

E-2C REPRODUCTION - HAWKEYE Carrier-Based Early Warning Aircraft

F/A-18E/F - HORNET Naval Strike Fighter

F/A-18E/F AESA – Active Electronically Scanned Array Radar Upgrade Program

JSOW/BLU-108 – Joint Stand-Off Weapon with BLU-108 submunition

LHD 1 - Amphibious Assault Ship

NESP - Navy Extremely High Frequency (EHF) Satellite Communications (SATCOM) Program

SH-60R - Multi-Mission Helicopter Upgrade

SM 2 (BLOCKS I/II/III/IV) - Standard Surface-to-Air Missile

SSN 21/AN/BSY-2 - SEAWOLF Class Nuclear Attack Submarine / Combat System

STRATEGIC SEALIFT - Naval Transport Ship

T-45TS - Undergraduate Jet Pilot Training System

TACTICAL TOMAHAWK

TRIDENT II MISSILE - Sea Launched Ballistic Missile

V-22 - OSPREY Joint Advanced Vertical Lift Aircraft

**AIR FORCE DAB (ACAT I D) LIST**

ABL - Airborne Laser

ADVANCED EHF – Advanced Extremely High Frequency Program

C-130 AMP – C-130 Aircraft Avionics Modernization Program

C-5 RERP – C-5 Aircraft Reliability and Reengineering Program

EELV - Evolved Expendable Launch Vehicle

F-22 - Advanced Tactical Fighter

GBS – Global Broadcast Service

JASSM - Joint Air-to-Surface Standoff Missile

JDAM - Joint Direct Attack Munition

MP RTIP - Multi-platform Radar Technology Insertion Program

MILSTAR - Satellite Low Data Rate/Medium Data Rate Communications System.

NAVSTAR GPS – Global Positioning System

SBIRS - Space-Based Infrared System Program

WIDEBAND GAPFILLER – Wideband communications satellite system

#### **AIR FORCE COMPONENT (ACAT I C) LIST**

AMRAAM - Advanced Medium Range Air-to-Air Missile.

AWACS RSIP (E-3) - Airborne Warning and Control System Radar Systems Improvement Program

B-1 CMUP – B-1 LANCER Penetrating Bomber Conventional Mission Upgrade Program (CMUP)

B-2A - SPIRIT Stealth Bomber

C-17A - GLOBEMASTER III Advanced Cargo Aircraft

C-130J - HERCULES Cargo Aircraft

DMSP – Defense Meteorological Satellite System

JPATS - Joint Primary Aircraft Training System

JSTARS - Joint Surveillance Target Attack Radar System (Aircraft)

MINUTEMAN III GRP - Guidance Replacement Program

MINUTEMAN III PRP - Propulsion Replacement Program

NAS – National Airspace System

TITAN IV – Space Booster

## **DoD DAB (ACAT I D) LIST**

Ballistic Missile Defense Organization Programs (BMD Acquisition Executive):

PATRIOT PAC-3 - Patriot Advanced Capability (Army Executing Agent)

Navy Area TBMD - Navy Area Theater Ballistic Missile Defense

NMD - National Missile Defense Program

THAAD - Theater High Altitude Area Defense (Army)

NTW - Navy Theater Wide Ballistic Missile Defense

MEADS - Medium Extended Air Defense System (Army)

JSF - Joint Strike Fighter

JSIMS – Joint Simulation System

NPOESS - National Polar-Orbiting Operational Environmental Satellite System (Multi-Agency weather satellite system with Department of Commerce (DoC) as lead agency)

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